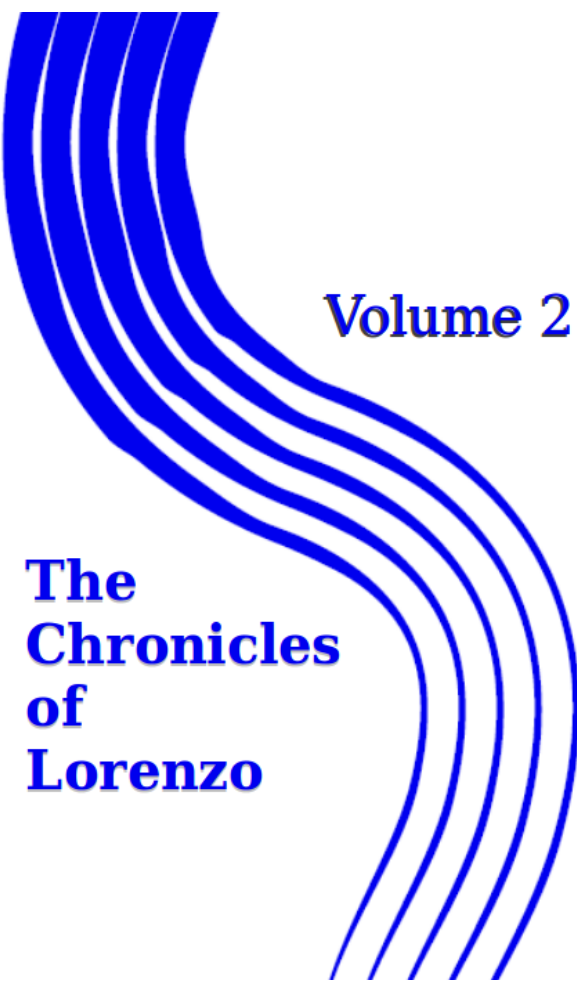




Volume 2

**The
Chronicles
of
Lorenzo**

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*The Chronicles
of Lorenzo
Volume 2*

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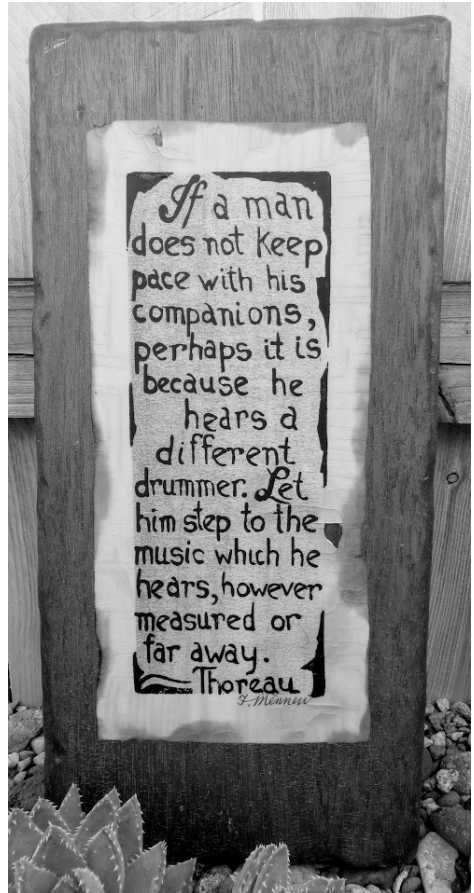
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Zanzabir Dior
Zac Caldwell
Zak

Forward

One of the pieces that I wrote in *Volume 1* of these *Chronicles* (# 159) was titled "History is life's background music." The premise of the story was that whether we like it or not, news of the world is continuously seeping into our subconscious from a wide variety of sources, some of which we aren't even aware of. This is particularly true for young people who don't actively listen to or read the news stories of the day. In the piece that I wrote for *Volume 1*, I pointed out some of the news that dominated the headlines during the first few years of my life.

Here in *Volume 2* of my *Chronicles* I've decided to take this idea to a new level. So what I have done, at least where it makes sense, is to include a few of the headlines that were making news on the day, week, or month in which the story took place, *and* are stories that I would have heard in the background of my life at that time. So in this *Volume*, you will see the notation **Background Music** followed by a headline or two at the end of each of some of my stories. Hopefully, this will add a fascinating new dimension to *The Chronicles of Lorenzo*.

My dad created this piece of folk art soon after my brother and I left home to follow our own paths. He hung this piece over the mantle in our house, and it remained there until my mother sold the house and moved to Florida. Since then, this little wooden plaque has hung in my home office, where I see it and think about my mom and dad every day. Subconsciously, this famous quote has, no doubt, been a significant influence on me, as has the quotation below.



"Unless one says goodbye to what one loves, and unless one travels to completely new territories, one can expect merely a long wearing away of oneself and an eventual extinction."

Jean Dubuffet

201

My dad's top dresser drawer

As a young boy, I was always fascinated with the top drawer in my dad's dresser. It was filled with all kinds of strange objects, most of which didn't mean anything to me. From time-to-time, he would take one of his treasured objects out of the drawer and tell me a story about it. After he died in 1975, at the age of 63, it fell to me to clean out this drawer filled with his most precious treasures. What surprised me was how little I knew about most of these curious possessions of his. I still have his pocket knife and that little ceramic human skull ashtray, the thing that terrified me as a child whenever I ventured a peek into what my little brother and I simply called "dad's drawer."

Well, I don't have a top dresser drawer myself, but that hasn't kept me from saving my own assortment of seemingly meaningless junk. Mine is kept in an old shoebox, as well as on a little table next to my desk. Looking at it objectively, I can see that, after I die, whoever has to clear out my things will most likely throw it all away, because without me there to tell the story attached to each memento there is no reason to save any of it. So I've decided to get this stuff out one more time and tell the stories of some of this sentimental junk here before it disappears forever.

Let's begin with the shoebox first. Here is what's in it:

- Some spent shell casings from a machine gun
- A baseball that was given to me by Adlai Stevenson
- Two grade-school patrol belts



- A little box of seashells that my dad picked up on a South Pacific beach during World War Two
- A ring my dad made during the war
- An eye patch with a skull and crossbones on it that I wore when I was on the USS Apache
- Some old business cards of mine
- A small American flag with only 49 stars and a five cent price tag on it
- A black and white photo of me at sea on the USS Apache
- A commissioning pennant from the USS Apache
- An official Sorin Hall button
- An envelope containing the rosary that Pope Pious XII blessed while my cousin, Sister Justina, held it in her hand
- A business card from Cafe Lâm in Hanoi
- Two small Peanuts characters made by one of my children
- Two Robert Burns Cigarillo boxes filled with little treasures that I'll talk about later

So those are the contents of my equivalent of a top dresser drawer. In the following stories, I'll tell you a little about some of this stuff.

202

Machine gun shells

When I was in 11th grade, my girlfriend was Becky Barnes, and it was she who talked me into joining our high school gun club. That's right, the Marine Corps sent a man to train us in the use of firearms, and Becky was the club's best sharpshooter. I wasn't a bad shot myself, but Becky's targets were always the winners.

I can't remember how we first became boyfriend and girlfriend, but for the better part of a year, we were about as close as two high school sweethearts could be. Although the intensity of my feelings back then has faded from my memory, I still clearly remember how my heart would skip a beat every time I saw her.

Becky was a year younger than me, but even so, she was more calm and self-possessed than I was. Before her parents would allow her to go out with me, I had to pass her dad's inspection. Fortunately, we got along great. Mr. Barnes was a ham radio operator, and his call sign was K9BUI. He said that it stood for K9 Big Ugly Idiot, which is why I probably remember it yet today. Floyd Barnes taught me Morse Code, and I apprenticed under him while I worked to get my own ham radio license. We became good friends, I thought.



***Becky Barnes, my date
for the Junior Prom -
1959***

But the day after I took Becky to my Junior Prom she called me with some devastating news. Her father told her that she had to stop seeing me. He had terminated my relationship with her for only one reason: I was a Catholic. He made it very clear that there was no way that his daughter would ever marry a Catholic, and that was it. He thought that we were getting too serious, I guess.

Becky and I lost touch after I graduated from high school. But in 1982, I was featured in a story in Forbes Magazine, and Becky saw it. So she sent me a lovely letter congratulating me and bringing me up to date on her life since we both left the little town of Rochelle, Illinois. At the time Becky had been chosen to a position of prominence in one of the New England states. I was very impressed, actually, as it seemed to me that she had greatly exceeded my own

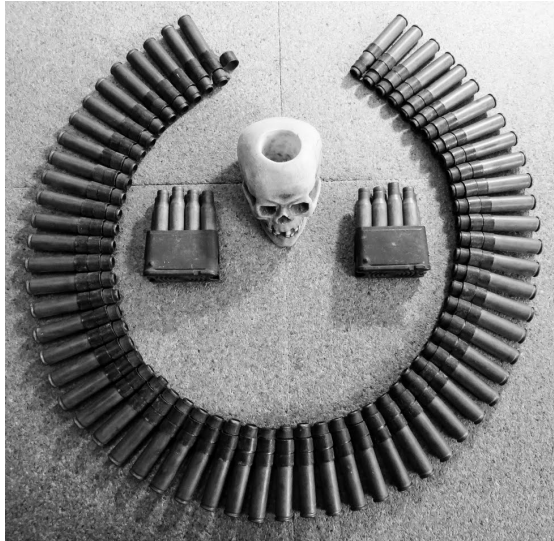
accomplishments. We never communicated after that. . . . And I never got my ham radio license either.

Please don't think that I'm missing the irony here of having spent shell casings, items of death and war, bring back to my mind one of the sweetest times of my life, the first time that I was in love. That irony isn't lost on me, not for a moment.

Now getting back to the story about the shell casings.

One weekend a month we would go out to the local hunting club's firing range and train to become proficient shots. For target practice, we used 22 caliber rifles, but our Marine instructor also brought a Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) and a 30 caliber machine gun for us to learn how to use.

For some reason, I kept some of the spent shell casings from the machine gun and BAR, and I have lugged them around with me for sixty years now. Don't ask me why, because I have no idea why I felt a need to keep these relics of my high school days. However, I did let my oldest son use them as part of his Halloween costume one year. So they didn't just sit in that old shoebox all those years.



In the center of the photo of my precious machine gun shells is the little ceramic human skull ashtray that was in my dad's top dresser drawer.

Background Music:

I was devastated when Buddy Holly died three months before my Junior Prom.

My dad and I listened to the fight in which Floyd Patterson became heavyweight champion.

Nixon and Khrushchev held the 'Kitchen Debate' and scared us all.

203

A baseball from Adlai Stevenson

The summer before I went into fifth grade Adlai Stevenson was the governor of Illinois and was the featured celebrity at the Kane County Fair, which was held in Elgin. Unlike how things are today, even though I was only ten years old, I roamed around the fair on my own. My parents may have taken me there, but my only memories of that night are of wandering around by myself.

One of the featured events at the fair was a semi-pro baseball game. I sat in the stands for the first few innings but soon became bored. Governor Stevenson had already thrown out the first pitch, and that was the main reason that I even attended the game. He was to be the first celebrity that I had ever seen in person. Having seen all of the game that I was interested in, I jumped down from the bleachers and ran around in back of them planning on making a hasty exit from the ball field. As I rushed around the corner of the stands, I ran smack into some old guy in a suit. It was Adlai Stevenson.

To keep me from bouncing off him and falling backward, Stevenson caught me and propped me up on my feet. I was utterly freaked out and began apologizing for running into him. He just smiled, reached into his coat pocket, and handed me one of the baseballs that he had been given before the game. For several years that was my most valuable possession, even though we often played with it.

Today, hardly anyone even remembers who Adlai Stevenson was. In 1952 and again in 1956 Stevenson was the Democratic

candidate for President, but he lost to Eisenhower both times. I never forgave my parents, lifelong Democrats, for voting for Eisenhower. When he died, attendees at his funeral included President Johnson, Vice-president Humphrey, and Chief Justice Earl Warren, but I'll bet none of them had a baseball that Stevenson had given them.

Background Music:

The keel was laid for the USS Nautilus, the first nuclear submarine, thrilling us Navy and science fiction fans.

Above ground atomic tests were held in Nevada, and we were afraid that the fallout would reach us in Illinois.

My dad said that he was worried because Eisenhower resigned as Supreme Commander of NATO ... later that year he was elected President.

204

Safety patrol belts

At many grammar schools in the U.S., the older students are tasked with helping the flow of students who need to cross streets near to the school. We called them the safety patrol, but I'm not sure if they are still called that yet today.

The grammar school near where I live today teaches children from K-5 and uses the fifth graders to assist teachers who supervise the younger children as they cross the street in front of the school. The grade school that I attended was for grades 1-8, and it was the 7th and 8th graders who were picked for safety patrol, which was considered a great honor for those selected.

We had about five street intersections to cover, but one of them was a plumb assignment during the winter months. It was one block



Top: ready-to-use patrol belt

Bottom: my folded treasures

south of our school, and the business that was on the corner there had a little vestibule between the outer and inner doors where we could get out of the cold wind when we weren't helping the younger children across the street.

One of the things that we had to master before becoming a patrol boy (girls weren't allowed to be in the safety patrol back then) was that we had to know how to fold our little white patrol belts. I was really good at folding my patrol belt correctly, and after I left grade school, I stole two of them for some reason that I can no longer remember. They were both folded at the time, and I've never dared to unfold them because I'm sure that I couldn't remember how to get them back to their pristine folded glory.

Background Music:

Elvis Presley's "Don't Be Cruel" and "Hound Dog" reach Billboard's #1 spot, and I still have the 45s of them that I bought, along with my original Buddy Holly records ... all are well-used

The dear Abby advice column debuted, and my dad thought it was a foolish thing to have in a newspaper

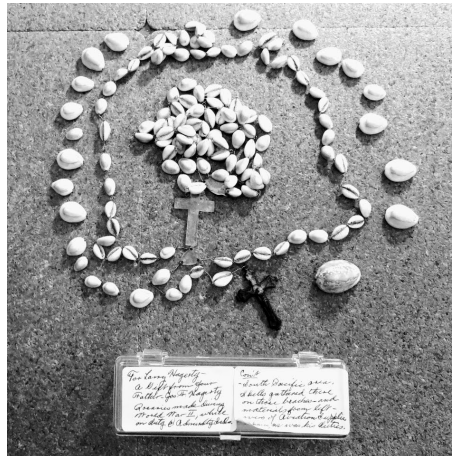
Martin Luther King's home was bombed, but I only heard about it on the black radio station in Chicago where my dad listened to the blues each night.

205

South Pacific seashells

One of the boxes in my "shoebox of a top drawer" was a little plastic box that I found in my mother's top drawer after she died. Here is what she wrote on a label that was stuck to the box:

*For Larry Hagerty
A Gift from your Father - Jos.
F. Hagerty*



Rosaries made during World War II, while on duty on Admiralty Islands - South Pacific area.

Shells gathered there on those beaches - and materials from leftovers of Aviation Supplies Repairs, as was his duties.

That more or less sums up the contents of that little plastic box. However, those two rosaries bring back a whole load of other memories.

During my early years in grammar school, I would bring home all kinds of horrible Catholic requirements that we were told were necessary to keep us out of hell because we were such awful sinners, at least that is how we understood what the priests and nuns were teaching us. One of the things that would help to "cleanse our souls" was to say the rosary as a family each night during Lent. In the beginning, they weren't fun family experiences, as I remember them.

Then one day, I somehow stumbled on those two rosaries that dad made during the war. It didn't take much pleading on my part to get my parents to let my little brother and I use these two seashell rosaries. As strange as this may sound, I began looking forward to our family rosary nights, because while everyone else was repeating meaningless mantras, I was daydreaming about living a Robinson Crusoe life on a South Sea Island, where the beaches were covered with shells like the ones running through my fingers as we prayed.

Background Music:

I was only three and a half years old when my dad returned from World War Two, but, from what my mother told me later, the constant talk between the adults in our house was about the war. We lived with my mother's parents and unmarried sister. My grandmother was German, my grandfather was from Ireland, and my dad was serving with the Navy in the South Pacific. Like all American families back then, the war touched us in many different ways and with a wide range of emotions.

206

A ring my dad made

I didn't think about this until just now, but that ring in my "shoebox top drawer" is probably the first piece of plastic that I ever saw. It was made of acrylic that went under the trade name of Plexiglas. Back in the 1940s materials like that were primarily used by the military, and even then were not widely found. My dad, being in aviation supply, had access to blocks of it, out of which he made jewelry.

His ring was quite simple as you can see from the photo. The stone in the center is a cat's eye shell that he picked up on the beach. I loved playing with that old ring when I was a boy because it was one of the few non-breakable objects that I knew of, which was also transparent. From time-to-time, my dad would wear it for a few weeks, but then it would disappear into his top dresser drawer again.



Today I wish that I had been more curious about my dad's time spent in the South Pacific during the war. Besides rings and rosaries, my dad also made a lot of other jewelry using cat's eyes and slabs of mother-of-pearl that he recovered from huge clam shells he picked up on the beach. One of the rings, he told me, was fashioned out of a metal nut that he removed from a Japanese plane that had crashed on the island. It looks like aluminum, but at the time he first showed it to me there weren't any aluminum nuts and bolts available in the civilian world, and so it was a rarity that his friends often wondered over because it was so light.

To me, this indicates that there must have been a lot of downtime when the men were left to their own devices. Or maybe he worked on these things late at night, after his workday was over. And what exactly did he do on Manus Island during the war?

This brings me to the point that I am trying to make with these *Chronicles*. My dad didn't leave any written memories like the ones that I'm recording here. And I guess that your parents and grandparents haven't left you many details of their daily lives either. But you can! Why don't you start right now and begin jotting down a few little stories that one day will be cherished by your great-grandchildren, as they try to understand how their family has weathered the storms of life.

207

My pirate eye patch

In 1969, while I was serving as the navigator on the USS Apache, we had a ten-month deployment that took us from San Diego, down to Panama and through the canal, then on to many months in the middle of the Atlantic before retracing our course and returning to San Diego. During that time, my right eye was damaged due to spending too much time taking sun sights without proper protection.



***Lorenzo at sea in the
Atlantic circa 1969***

When we reached Mayport, Florida on our last stop before heading out into the Atlantic, a Navy doctor told me that the best thing I could do was to simply not use that eye for a few months. So he gave me an eye patch to cover it. After my first day using it on the ship, one of my quartermasters took it and painted a skull and crossbones on it. I last wore it two years ago for Halloween.

Background Music:

The first humans landed on the moon. On that day I was in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean on the Scorpion Operation and listened to the landing in our ship's radio shack as it came in over short wave radio.

208

A few old business cards

I have no idea why those business cards are in that box. Somewhere I have a manila envelope that has dozens of my former business cards. I'm not talking about twenty copies of the same card. I'm talking about dozens of cards each listing a different occupation of mine. If I ever come across that envelope, I'll record them all in these *Chronicles*.

The four cards that I found in my shoebox are all the same and list me as the Group Marketing Manager for Network Computing for the company that is now known as Verizon. I have no idea why I put them in that box.

209

An American flag with only 49 stars

In January of 1959, Castro took over Cuba. But here in the states, the more significant news was that Alaska had just become the 49th state of the union. This may now seem no more than a footnote in history, but back then it was big news. For 17 years, I had been living in the 48 states. This forced a change in how we thought about our country. Now there were 49 states, and we learned that Hawaii wouldn't be far behind Alaska. Soon there would be 50!



At the time, my dad owned the Ben Franklin variety store in Rochelle, Illinois, and I was the "stock boy." Whenever trucks would arrive with more goods to sell, I was there to help unload the trucks, if I wasn't in school. After putting the boxes of new merchandise in our stock room, my next job was to put price tags on everything. That was back before some of the new adhesives were invented, and so for what we called "soft goods," mainly clothes, our little tags were secured with pins.



Looking down the aisles of my dad's Ben Franklin store

I can actually remember when our shipment of new flags came in. There were three sizes of them, and I still have one small one and several medium-sized 49-star flags. I kept them because I realized that 49-star flags were only going to be available for a few months before the 50-star flags came out.

The photo above doesn't show it clearly, but the price tag for those small flags was five cents. I stamped that on the little tag with a pricing machine that we had, and then I stuck the pins through the flag and bent them together, where they often became instruments of pain when someone picked them up the wrong way. Back then, I thought that these 49-star flags would become collectors' items. That didn't happen, but I could probably get at least a dime for it, thus doubling my money.

Background Music:

Castro's rebels attack Havana, and my parents weren't sure if this was a good or a bad thing.

News of Nixon being booed and stoned by crowds in Peru was my first indication that everyone in the world didn't love the USA.

Mao begins the Great Leap Forward movement, but in high school, this was only briefly mentioned as not being a huge deal, just propaganda.

210

A photo of me on the USS Apache

I don't know why I have kept that old black and white photo. It wasn't taken for any special occasion. On the back, I've written: "22 Apr 69



Approx 70 miles off Florida Phase II Scorpion Ops." At the time we were just leaving the U.S. coast on our way to the Azores for a brief stop before heading to the location where the USS Scorpion had sunk a year earlier.

The picture was taken on the wing of the Apache's bridge. About the only unusual thing I can see is that I'm the only person on the bridge who isn't wearing a hat, which was required of everyone in the Navy when they were outside. I never had much regard for Navy Regulations, and so going without a hat was my small way of protesting the fact that I was in the military against my wishes.

That said, at the time of this photo, I was the executive officer on the *Apache*, and as such, I was the officer in charge of seeing that everyone dressed according to regulations. It should be no surprise that I never wrote myself up for not following regulations.

Background Music:

Massive anti-Vietnam War demonstrations occur in many U.S. cities as the Defense Department began its so-called Vietnamization campaign, which those of us who had been there knew wouldn't work.

Although I wasn't aware of it, April 7, 1969, became the Internet's symbolic birth date with the publication of RFC 1.

Sirhan Sirhan was convicted of assassinating U.S. Senator Robert Kennedy.

211

A commissioning pennant

Sometimes called a masthead pennant, the naval tradition of a commissioning pennant reaches back to the 17th century. Basically, it is a slim, flag-like pennant that is flown from the top of a warship's mast from the moment of its commissioning until the moment of decommissioning as a U.S. Navy ship of the line.



Although these pennants are flown twenty-four hours a day, they are taken down and exchanged for a new pennant whenever they wear out from constant exposure to the elements. The pennant that I've been keeping all these years is the one that was flown on the USS Apache during the several month periods when we were on-station in the Atlantic while the Trieste was diving to the site of the wreckage of the submarine USS Scorpion.

On the last day that we were on the station, I gave one of the signalmen a new commissioning pennant to replace the pennant that we had been flying since we left San Diego a half a year earlier. I can still remember standing next to him as he lowered this old pennant and hoisted our new one. While there is a specific protocol the deals with the proper means of disposing of an old ship's pennant, I disregarded them and kept this one for myself.



***Apache towing Whitesands
into Panama and flying
my commissioning pennant***

A few moments ago, after I took the picture of the Apache's pennant, I folded it up and put it back into my old shoebox, right next to the 49-star flag. What is it about these old objects that have caused me to keep them with me for all these years?

I clearly remember standing in the stockroom of my dad's Ben Franklin store and sticking that five cent price tag on it. So I took several of these flags to save as a remembrance of when there were only 49 states, and I put it in a box of my stuff that I left with my parents when I went to college. Somehow that box was found and moved from Rochelle to Elgin while I was away at college. It was moved between three houses in Elgin before it somehow made its way to Texas and my home in Houston and then to Friendswood and then to Dallas and then to Florida (three houses there) and then to California where it was moved between six different places, including two separate storage

facilities. The commissioning pennant followed a similar path but went directly from San Diego to Houston where it joined the flag in my shoebox.

So those little items have a long history of following me around, and I guess that is why they are still dear to me. You see, by holding them and touching them, I feel that I am still directly connected to the person that I once was, the person that grew into the man that I am today. It feels good to have a physical connection like that. It makes me feel stable.

212

A Sorin Hall button

When I was a senior at the University of Notre Dame, I was living in the basement of Sorin Hall. As I see the sentence that I've just written, I have to laugh. Without knowing the history of Notre Dame, it sounds as if I was a wretched beggar living in a dark university basement. However, the basement of Sorin Hall turned out to be the most prestigious address on the campus, which goes to show how much tradition holds sway at Notre Dame.



Sorin Hall, we were told, is the oldest Catholic university men's dormitory in the country. That fact alone wouldn't have been enough to tempt students to live in the basement of what, back in 1962, was an ancient building that was falling into disrepair. Today it has been refurbished and is on the National Register of Historic Places, having been first occupied in 1889. Again, that wasn't what attracted us to the basement of Sorin. It was the fact that a lot of the most famous Notre Dame football stars of the past had lived in that basement at one time. Its ancient vibe was irresistible.

While I was a student there, our room assignments for the following year were allocated according to our grades. Fortunately

for Dave Herlihy and myself, our third roommate, Larry Kavanagh, was at the top of our class, and so he got one of the first room choices. And if he chose a triple room, then Dave and I could join him even though our grades were far below his. At that time, everyone changed their dormitory each year, and they were segregated by class year. Sorin Hall had traditionally been only for fourth-year students. Today, as I understand it, a student stays in the same dormitory for all four years, thus creating a mix of students from all four class years.



***Dave Herlihy, Larry Kavanagh,
& Lorenzo***

In the Spring of 1962, it was announced that the university was going to test having a few students stay in the same dorm for two years. And the test would begin by assigning a few juniors to the basement of Sorin Hall. I'm not sure how Dave I and convinced Larry to chose the basement room for us the following year,

but we spent our third year at Notre Dame sharing the corner basement turret room that was across from Sacred Heart Church. It was the plum address on campus.

During our days in Sorin, we participated in much foolishness. For example, Dave and I pulled the chariot carrying a guy who had just landed from a helicopter and was holding the mysterious statue of Father Sorin that was the source of numerous legends at the school. The button that sparked this memory is something that we used to raise money for something or other. And through a friend of my dad's, we also sold sweatshirts that said "Stolen from Sorin Hall" on them. I think that I still have mine around here somewhere in one of the too many old boxes that I can't seem to get rid of.

Background Music:

In November of my final year at Notre Dame, President Kennedy was assassinated. At the moment it happened, I was in the computer center using the IBM-1620. I had been allocated two hours of precious time on the only computer available for use by undergraduate engineering students. When the next person didn't show up at the end of my allotted time, I just kept working/playing with the computer. Since no one showed up, I spent the next several hours there and didn't learn of Kennedy's death until that evening when I returned to the basement of Sorin Hall. I guess that I was one of the last people on Earth to learn of John Kennedy's murder.

213

A rosary blessed by Pius XII

My grandma Fox's sister, my great aunt, was a nun who was a member of the School Sisters of Notre Dame (no connection to the university). Her name was Sister Justinia. By the time that I got to know her, she had become one of the oldest sisters at their big Mother House in Mequon, Wisconsin. I remember her as being very quiet and smiling a lot, and it seemed to me that she received a great deal of respect from the other nuns.



When she died, for reasons that I never understood, she left some of her personal effects to me. Somewhere I have her prayer book, but what I have saved in my special box is her rosary. I clearly remember her telling me about her trip to Rome in the 1950s. She crossed the Atlantic on a ship, and I remember her telling a wild story about the storm that they went through and how she and the sisters who were with her saved the vessel through their prayers. When they got to Rome, they had an audience with Pope Pius XII, and as he greeted her, she held her rosary in her hands as he blessed it. That rosary, so precious to her all those years, is now, ignominiously, in my old shoebox, all its glory is in the past.

At the Mother House in Mequon, there was what they called a perpetual adoration chapel in the convent, and that was where a communion wafer blessed by a priest was on constant display. It was a favorite place for the nuns to go for quiet prayer. While I was studying at Notre Dame, my mother would write to Sister Justinia and give her a list of days on which I would be taking my end-of-semester final exams. Dear Sister Julian would then write a note asking the nuns to pray for me during exam time, and she would post it on the door to the perpetual adoration chapel. Since I had 24x7 prayers going for me, I never felt pressured to study very hard for finals. My undergraduate grades were not all that great, and so I'm assuming that the prayers of those poor nuns was all that was required for a lazy student like me graduate.

214

A business card from Cafe Lâm

In June of 1999, Marycie and I accompanied my dear friend Anphong, along with his wife and oldest son, on a visit to Viet Nam. I fictionalized parts of that trip in my novel, *The Genesis Generation*. One of the scenes that take place in Hanoi is of a visit to Mr. Lâm's café. Here is what I wrote about that experience (in the voice of one of my fictional characters):



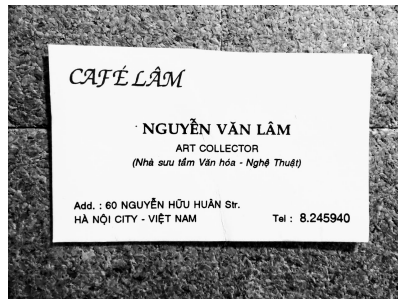
Lorenzo at Cafe Lâm, June 1999

My favorite place in Hanoi, though, wasn't in the Old Quarter. My Vietnamese friend from work made me

promise to stop and say hello to an old friend of his, a man who owned a small coffee shop called Café Lâm, which I finally found today, but only after a great deal of effort on the part of my cyclo driver. The sign in front is so unobtrusive that we drove by it twice before noticing its yellow background fading into the dull green walls of the building. Open shutters revealed black steel bars that substituted for glass in the windows.

Mr. Lâm lived in a large room right behind the small coffee shop, which held only a scattering of tables and benches. A thin, white silk sheet hung from a rope stretched across a door that separated his living quarters from the shop. But behind that little piece of cloth, there existed a world of wonder beyond my powers of description. Even now, it is hard for me to believe all that I saw. Like the thin membrane between ordinary consciousness and psychedelic consciousness, that gossamer sheet of silk concealed an art collector's heaven.

His room was probably about half-again as big as the public area, but it seemed even larger because the ceiling went up for more than two stories. Every square meter of wall space was covered with great art. Framed paintings were also stacked all around the room on shelves, leaning against the walls, and on the floor. Large tables were



This business card evokes many good memories for me.

piled high with unframed canvases. I know I'm not doing this description justice. Just try to imagine several thousand original works of art all piled up in one place, and you'll begin to get the idea.

In the far corner of the room was a spiral staircase that wound its way up to the second and third-floor art galleries. And yes, in every sense of the word, these were true art galleries, hardwood floors and all. As I understand the story, during the interminable years of war, first fighting the French and then the Americans, Mr. Lãm served as Viet Nam's greatest patron of the arts. What little profits he made in his tiny coffee shop went mainly to provide supplies to a core group of artists who frequented his shop, and who repaid his kindness by giving him some of their finest work.

As of right now, his collection is the most valuable private collection in Viet Nam. It consists of thousands of works of art, many of whose creators were killed during American bombing campaigns. I hope that this wonderful collection doesn't disappear when Mr. Lãm dies, but the word on the street is that the communist party members who are already looting Viet Nam can't wait to get their hands on Mr. Lãm's collection.

Maybe it was the juxtaposition of such superb art with the unimposing little coffee shop that enchanted me so, but my afternoon with Mr. Lãm will remain one of the most memorable and pleasant interludes of my life. As we parted, I felt better than I had in years. The radiance of Mr. Lãm's spirit made me feel as if I'd been in the presence of a Bodhisattva. "What amazing things we humans can accomplish, even in the face of great adversity," I thought.

When I arrived at the shop, Mr. Lârn was sleeping, but when I asked someone if I could see his art collection they immediately roused him and ushered me into the large back room where he lived with all this art. I'm not sure why he took to me so but using my cyclo driver as an interpreter, I sat next to his bed, where he was seated, and we visited for several hours. At one point, he urged me to go to the upper galleries and view the art, which I did. However, rather than spending a long time viewing this great art, I instead hurried back to visit with Mr. Lârn some more.

Anphong had told me earlier that Mr. Lârn had only sold one painting in all these years, and that was to raise funds required to build the upstairs galleries. But he had consistently refused to sell any more of this valuable art collection to anyone. As I was about to leave, he asked me if I wanted to buy one of the paintings. At first, I thought that my interpreter had misunderstood him, but Mr. Lârn confirmed that he was offering me a rare opportunity. So I spent some time with him going through a few stacks of unframed paintings.

There were several paintings by artists that Anphong had told me about, artists who had been killed in the American bombing campaigns. And Mr. Lârn tried his best to get me to buy one of them. I should add that this was the last day of my trip. I was almost out of cash, and he knew that I only had \$50 to spend. Yet he still tried to get me to purchase one of these valuable paintings for that ridiculously small sum.

There was one painting among the dozens that we sorted through that immediately captured me, however. It was created by Tran Nguyen Dan and featured Mr. Lârn sitting on the end of his bed, just as he was during my visit with him. When I saw that painting I knew that it was the



one for me. He tried to talk me out of it, pointing out that the other paintings were much more valuable, but I told him that it was the memory of my visit with him that I wanted to take home with me. So I bought the painting of Mr. Lâ, smuggled it out of the country, and it now hangs on my office wall.

Mr. Lâ has since died, and I've been told that the political elite of Viet Nam has divided that magnificent art collection among themselves. They got everything . . . Everything but my precious painting of Mr. Lâ. Oh, I almost forgot to mention that in the painting, right next to him, is the unmistakable image of a bong!

215

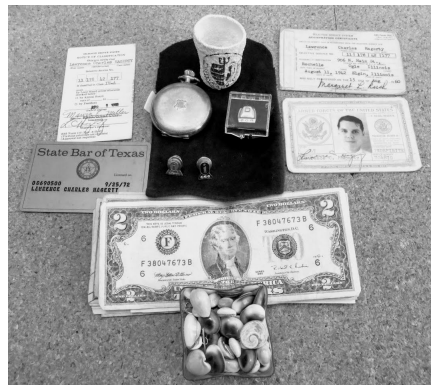
Two Robert Burns Cigarillo boxes



The final two items in my shoebox, from Story #201, I listed as: "Two Robert Burns Cigarillo boxes filled with little treasures that I'll talk about later." Now it is later.

I may not talk about everything in these two little boxes, because some of it is just boring. For example, the bottom of the box on the right is covered with loose change from

Mexico and several European countries. I suspect that everyone who travels internationally has a bit of foreign money that they found in their pockets after a trip. Money, even small change that can't easily be spent, isn't something that many of us can simply throw away.



So let's begin with the box on the left. What kind of worthless junk do you think that little time bomb holds?

There are a few cards, like my original Texas State Bar card, my military ID, and draft cards. Also, there are some more of my dad's seashell collection, a pocket watch that I carried when I first began practicing law, three sales award pins that I earned in various companies, some old dollar bills, and a little Styrofoam cup. When I think about my dad's shells, my mind goes back to my childhood. The draft cards bring back my high school years. The cup and ID card remind me of my life in the Navy, while the watch and bar card block out all thoughts except the years in Houston when I was practicing law. It's a great little box of memories.

216

A tiny Styrofoam cup

In *Volume 1* of these *Chronicles*, I told a couple of stories about my experiences while I was on the USS Apache and we were supporting the bathyscaphe USS Trieste while she was diving in the middle of the Atlantic at the site of the lost submarine USS Scorpion. If I remember correctly, the ocean was 11,300 feet deep at that location, which means that the water pressure was over 340 atmospheres, 5,036 pounds per square inch.



***This once was a large
Styrofoam cup***

On the outside of *Trieste*, there was a long, rectangular box that was open to the sea, as its sides and bottom were made of a mesh of steel wire. I'm not sure what other function that box served, but one of the things that we used it for was to send items down to the bottom to bring back as keepsakes for our crews to take home with them, like my cup. I guess that the number of

items that have ever been over 11,000 feet deep in an ocean and then returned to the surface is extremely small.

One of the most popular things to put in the box was anything made out of Styrofoam, because at that great depth all of the air would be forced out of the material, leaving it much smaller than it was before it went to the bottom of the ocean.

One of the men on our ship brought a case of coke aboard and kept his drinks cold in a small Styrofoam cooler. So we decided to send it to the bottom and see what would happen. The poor guy never had a cold coke again on that cruise, because his cooler came back so small that it wouldn't even hold a single can.



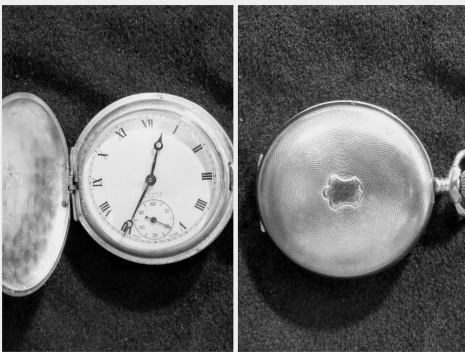
***That little Styrofoam box
once held a six pack***

Background Music:

Near the end of the many weeks that we remained at virtually a single location in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, an event took place that has had an even more significant impact on life in the United States: WOODSTOCK! So there is no way that I can claim to have been there.

217

Pocket watch



When I graduated from law school, my wife, Mary Alice Logan Hagerty, gave me this pocket watch. Inside the cover, it is inscribed "L.C.H. LOVE M.A.H." I carried this watch during my first few years of practicing law. At the time, many of us lawyers in Houston wore

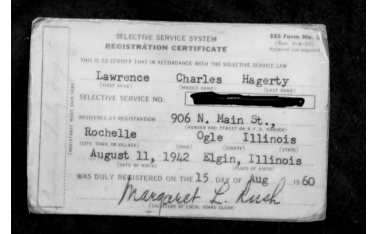
vests. I wasn't an exception, and I had a fancy little chain that ran

between the top of the watch and a button hole on my vest. While I was no William Kunstler, at least I looked like a successful Texas lawyer. And, yes, I also wore cowboy boots on some days, but I never perfected a Southern accent.

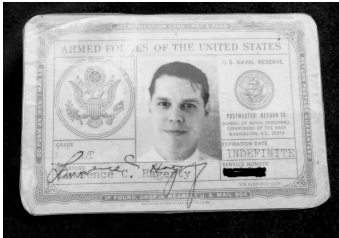
218

Draft card

I have to laugh whenever someone tells me how lucky I was to have been young during the Sixties. If they would stop and think for a moment, it should be evident that in the year 1960 nobody yet knew it would be such a memorable decade.



I graduated from high school in June of 1960; two months later, I turned 18 and was required to register for the military draft. Needless to say, this was a dreaded event in the lives of many of us. We didn't yet know about Viet Nam, the Kennedy years, LSD, and hippies. But we did know that if we didn't register for the draft as soon as we turned 18 that the rest of our lives would be ruined.



As you can see from my draft card (above), I turned 18 on August 11th, and four days later I took my first step toward becoming the property of the USA and registered for the draft. The following month I began my studies at the University of Notre Dame, all the time worrying about the imminent danger of nuclear war. I find it almost beyond belief that here it is over 50 years later, and once again the threat of nuclear war has raised its ugly head. That certainly doesn't give me much hope for the long term survival of our species.

219

Saint Christopher medal

On December 18, 1964, I met Mary Logan Fogle, and our romance began. The following April, I left Houston to sail the Pacific in a square-rigged ship. On my return to Houston the next September, I somehow patched things up with Mary after having written to her only twice in all the time I was gone. However, I left again in December to bum around Europe for a couple of months before reporting for duty with the Navy in March of 1966.

Just before I left in December, Mary gave me a Saint Christopher medal. The back of the coin was inscribed with the date that we met. Although she wasn't a Catholic, Mary understood how, at that point in my life, I cherished symbols like this. We both knew that we may be parting for good. Of course, it didn't turn out that way, and someday I'll write a story about our turbulent courtship while I was at Officer Candidate School.



But back to the medal. I wore it for many years from the day she gave it to me, never taking it off. So it was with me during all of my time in the Navy, in law school, and while I practiced law. I can't remember when I stopped wearing it. A few years ago I came across it once again, and when I read the date on the back, I was stopped in my tracks. On that very same day, December 18th, but in 1975, my father died. Needless to say, every time I think about this synchronicity, my mind bounces off reflections of itself in this crazy mirror of life.

220

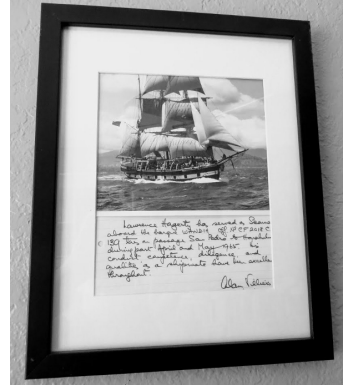
Diplomas

I still have the diploma that I received when I graduated from Saint Joseph's Grade School, as well as the one that I received when I graduated from Rochelle Township High School. And, of course, I have the one certifying that the University of Notre Dame awarded

me a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering. The only diploma that hangs on my office wall today, however, is a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree awarded to me by the University of Houston.

There is another diploma, of sorts, hanging on my office wall that I value above all the rest. It consists only of a small slip of paper with some handwriting on it. The script reads:

*Lawrence Hagerty has served as
Seaman aboard the barque
WANDIA off. No. CF 2018 C 139
tons on passage San Pedro to
Honolulu during part April and
May 1965. His conduct, competence, diligence, and
qualities as a shipmate have been excellent throughout.*



Alan Villiers

For me, this little note from Captain Villiers remains the highest praise that I have ever received. Sadly, few people today have any idea of who Alan Villiers was.

Let me put it this way for my friends in the worldwide psychedelic community. Suppose Terence McKenna and Sasha Shulgin were still alive. Then suppose that Terence gives you a call to say that he and Sasha are planning on spending a month in Sasha's lab developing and testing some new psychedelics. And then suppose that they are calling to invite you to spend that month with them. How would you feel?



That is how I felt when I received a telegram from Alan Villiers inviting me

***Lorenzo on the helm with
Alan Villiers watching***

to sail with him to Hawaii in a wooden, square-rigged ship. At the time, I was in my second semester of law school and was second in my class. Within hours of receiving the invite from Villiers, I had already quit my job and dropped out of law school. It would take seven years before I got back and finally earned my law degree.

In the interim, my friend John O'Quinn, who was at the top of our class when I left during our second semester, had already begun creating the reputation that considered him to be one of the best trial lawyers in the country. Today, the law library at the Bates College of Law is named after John, who was its principal donor. And the university's football field was also named for him after he died in an automobile accident during one of Houston's frequently violent rain storms.

There have been times when I would be watching a U. of H. football game and see John's name on the field. That would cause me to think of the times when John and I worked together on cases where my firm needed the services of a genuinely top-notch trial attorney, something I never came close to being myself. And I sometimes think of all the students who are studying in the O'Quinn library, and the athletes who are playing on O'Quinn field, many of whom most likely having no idea of who John was and all that he accomplished.

Yet, I never wonder what my life would have been like had I remained in law school rather than dropping out to sail with Captain Alan Villiers. I have no regrets about that sidetrack from my studies for a few years because my Pacific crossing on a square-rigged sailing ship was the grandest adventure of my life. And the praise that I received from Captain Villiers has been the highest praise that I ever hope to earn.

221

The Notre Dame Library

To college football fans, the Notre Dame Library building holds an iconic status. You see, the front of the thirteen-story high building

is covered with a mural of Jesus holding up his hands as if to signal the scoring of a touchdown, at least that's what seems to be implied, particularly when viewed inside the football stadium. Most people call the mural "Touchdown Jesus." That new library, now known as the Hesburgh Library, was dedicated and opened in September of 1963, my senior year at the university.

I was present at the dedication ceremony, which was presided over by Cardinal Tisserant, who at the time was the Dean of the College of Cardinals and was playing a significant role in the Vatican II Council. At the ceremony, I took several photos of Father Hesburgh and Cardinal Tisserant, and since I already knew Hesburgh, I was able to have him introduce me to the Cardinal. At the time, I thought that it was a huge deal to meet "the number two guy in the Vatican," as he was known on campus.



***Father "Ted"
Hesburgh at the 1963
library dedication***

In the spring of 1963, while the library was still under construction, my two roommates and I took an evening stroll to take a look at the latest progress being made on the new library, which was nearing completion. The site of the new library was on the old football practice field once used by Knute Rockne's teams. Traditionalists, like my roommate Dave Herlihy, were upset that the sacred Rockne field had been taken over by a library.

As we stood at the base of the new building and looked up, Dave spoke up and said, "I didn't know that shit could be piled that high." Behind us, a man's voice came out of the dark and said, "Good evening, boys." Then the man came forward and smiled at us. It was Father Hesburgh. Years later, when I was escorting him around Houston, Texas where he was to be the featured speaker at that year's Universal Notre Dame Night, however, I didn't remind him of Dave's comment about what by then was the Hesburgh Library.

Before the opening of the new library, our old one had what was called "closed stacks." In other words, only library employees were allowed in the cavernous rooms that held close to one million books. During my first year at Notre Dame, I was hired by the library to work in the stacks.



Library "stacks"

When someone wanted to check out a book, they first would fill out a request slip at the front desk. The request slip would then be sent up by pneumatic tube to whatever floor of the stacks the book was on. Us stack workers would then locate the book and send it down to the main floor in a dumbwaiter.

My favorite time to work was the last shift of the day. Back then, the library would close at 10:00 pm to give everyone time to get back to their dorm before lights out, which was 10:30 for freshmen. The reason I liked that shift was twofold. First of all, not many students would be using the library that late, and so the workload was negligible. At first, that meant I could use most of my time at work studying. But as the year progressed, I discovered that I had been assigned to the section where many of the books about sex, like the *Kinsey Reports*, were located. So it was in the Notre Dame Library in 1960 and 1961 where I first learned about sex in great detail, and I got paid for it as well!

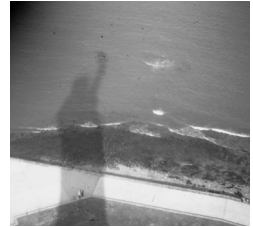
222

The Statue of Liberty

I took this photo on my high school senior trip, and it is my favorite picture from that 1960 adventure. It was a unique experience

to climb up inside that famous statue, and when I saw its shadow below, it was a picture I had to take.

To get this picture, I first climbed all 354 stairs inside the Statue of Liberty to get to the observation windows that are in the area of its crown. I like to think of this as an image of liberty fading into the shadows of the good old USofA.



223

Running out of gas

I always try to keep my gas tank half full, which seems to irritate some of my friends when I stop to fill up more often than they think necessary. But most of them have never run out of gas. I did once, **only once**, I should add.

It was in the winter of 1958, and I was driving my dad's car from our home in Rochelle, Illinois to visit some friends in Elgin. This was the first time that I drove between the two towns by myself, as it had only been a few months since I received my driver's license. The trip was just 50 miles, but I had obviously left Rochelle with a nearly empty gas tank. About midway between the two towns, in the middle of farm country, the car began to shudder, the engine started skipping, and before I completely understood the problem, the car was stalled on the side of the old blacktop road I was on.

There were several inches of snow on the ground that I had to trek through up a long lane to the nearest farmhouse. I knocked on their door, but no one was home. Since I was familiar with the customs of farm life in our area, I simply went to their barn, found an empty gas can, and I filled it up from the farm's gas pump. Back then, the farmers left their gas pumps unlocked. I left a note on their door, and the next day, I stopped again, paid them for the gas, and returned the gas can that I had borrowed from their barn. They had no problem with me borrowing some gasoline. In fact, they even

invited me in for lunch. But that was the only time that I've ever run out of gas.

Background Music:

Both the U.S. and the Soviet Union tested atomic bombs in the atmosphere, which made me wonder if the new transatlantic passenger jet service that PanAm had just begun would be safe.

Us Catholic children were supposed to be excited when Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli became Pope John XXIII, but the impact that he was about to have wasn't anticipated by us back then.

224

Ms. Frisbee

When I was growing up, I don't think there was such a thing as pre-school, at least nobody I knew ever attended one. So kindergarten was my first taste of sitting in a classroom. My teacher that first year was Ms. Frisbee. Now you may be thinking that we made fun of her name, but I began kindergarten in 1948, which was about ten years before the flying frisbee toy was introduced.

I have several clear memories from that school year. We lived only one block away from Lincoln School, and an "older boy" from down the street would stop by our house and walk me to school each morning. His name was Gordy Dreyfull, and to me, he seemed to be almost as old as my dad, yet he most likely was no more than ten years old.

My favorite memory from that year was nap time. Each of us students had to bring a small blanket or some such thing to lie on for a nap right after we had eaten our lunch. Kindergarten lasted about six hours back then. I loved nap time, and instead of a blanket, I had one of those little woven throw-rugs. It was



**Gordy Dreyfull
and Larry**

black and white in a zig-zag pattern, and in my mind, I can see it yet today.



**Lorenzo, Ms.
Frisbee, & Miguel**

My most memorable moment came when I traded desks with another boy in my class, after first plying him with gifts to convince him to move from his front row desk to my desk, which was in the second row and just to the left of where he sat. This event was a significant learning experience for me, and I've written about it in my short story titled "The Crayon Drawer." It's a little too long to publish in this book, but the lesson (that should have been) learned was, the grass isn't always greener on the other side of the fence.

About eight years after my dad died in 1975, my mother remarried a wonderful man named Leo Altepeter. My brother flew in from Spain for the wedding at Saint Mary's Church, just up the block from where we grew up. One of the people who came to celebrate the wedding was Ms. Frisbee, who had also been my little brother's kindergarten teacher.

Background Music:

In our working class, Democratic family it was an exciting time when Truman defeated Dewey in the presidential election.

I also remember hearing my parents and their friends celebrating the fact that Japanese Prime Minister Tojo had been sentenced to death by a war crimes tribunal.

225

Galaxies

This may seem kind of strange to think about today, but when I was growing up, I didn't yet know that there were other galaxies in the universe. At that time, the average person in this world had not yet learned that the Milky Way wasn't the only large star system in existence. Although Edwin Hubble's work that established the existence of other galaxies was published in 1939, that kind of

information didn't percolate out to us ordinary people for quite some time.

I can remember hearing bits and pieces about the existence of other galaxies when I was in high school, but it was usually presented as a hypothesis that had not yet been fully established as a fact. Granted, astronomers had been in agreement with Hubble's findings for many years before I went to college, but it was while I was attending the University of Notre Dame that the actuality of other galaxies finally became real to me.

Back then, our information sources consisted of the daily newspapers, radio, and the early days of television. But to delve into something scientific, like astrophysics, we had to go to the library and use the old card catalogs to look things like that up. Needless to say, during my high school years, I only went to the library when I was working on a specific project for school. A passing interest in something like the existence of other galaxies wasn't enough to get me to spend an afternoon in a library.

It was in a religion class at Notre Dame, of all places, that I learned that the existence of other galaxies was no longer speculation, but was something that had been established since 1939. I still remember walking out of that class and having a significant ah-ha moment while crossing the main quad on the way back to my room. Suddenly, the entire universe seemed so much more vast than I had imagined before. It was the first time that I felt insignificant when I thought about the cosmos.

Today I live not far from Mount Wilson, where Hubble did his pioneering work to establish the fact that the Milky Way isn't the whole story, and that the universe is littered with galaxies of many shapes and sizes, most of them significantly larger than the one we find ourselves in. And every time that mountain comes into view for me, I flash back to that afternoon on the main quad at Notre Dame when I finally grokked the fact that this universe is much larger than our little primate brains can actually comprehend. And I marvel once

again at how amazing it is that I find myself walking around this beautiful little planet, which is circling around a small star in an outer arm of a relatively insignificant spiral galaxy. Thinking about things like that most definitely keeps my ego in check.

Background Music:

While the big news was about Fidel Castro visiting Moscow for the first time, to us college students the big news was about Bob Dylan walking out on the Ed Sullivan Show. Show business experts at the time thought that walking out on a chance for national exposure on Sullivan's program meant that we would never hear the name Bob Dylan again.

226

The Cannabis Cup in Amsterdam

In 1998, during Thanksgiving week here in the States, I spent the week in Amsterdam, attending the 11th annual High Times Cannabis Cup. John Sinclair was the featured guest, and he did the honors of introducing Louis Armstrong and Mezz Mezzrow into the cannabis hall of fame.



John Sinclair

That was the first year that the Green House's Super Silver Haze won the cup. I am proud to say that I actually voted for it. I was one of the cup's judges that year, one of more than 2,000 judges I guess I should add. Well, that isn't wholly accurate. I did vote for the Haze, but I was a little too stoned to be able to find out where to turn in my ballot. I still have it in a box somewhere around here. That's the kind of meaningless crap I seem to have trouble throwing away.

What I remember most about that event were the friends that I made there. I arrived at the hotel a couple of hours before my room was ready, and so I joined a group of other cup attendees waiting in the lobby. After visiting for a while, several of us decided to wait in a little hole-in-the-wall coffee shop nearby. I described it in a scene in my novel, *The Genesis Generation*, thus ensuring that my trip was a

tax-deductible expense for background research. Actually, the Amsterdam chapter is my favorite part of that book, but that's another story.

Our little group, which mostly hung out together for the rest of the week, included two black hash dealers from Brooklyn, a stripper and her bodyguard from San Diego, and a young man from New Orleans who could roll the most perfect joints I've ever seen. Then there was Melody. She was a friend of Joe Cocker, lived near him and traveled for a few decades with that crowd. We hooked up and spent a lot of time together. You may come across some of my thoughts about her in my journals from that time. I had been re-reading *Steppenwolf* on that trip, and she became my Hermoine.

It was a great week, Thanksgiving week in Amsterdam, November 1998. Two months later, I found myself in a Lacandon jungle near the Palenque, Mexico ruins, and my life was forever changed.

Background Music:

The Kyoto Protocol was signed with much fanfare, but it was drowned out with the beginning of the Bill Clinton impeachment process.

Since I was in Europe at the time, the news of Tony Blair becoming the UK's Prime Minister was talked about in the coffee houses, but I paid little attention.

227

The Gouge

In *Volume 1* of these *Chronicles*, (#182) I mentioned that at Officer Candidate School my nickname was The Gouge. Where that came from was that, after engineering school and the first year of law school, the classes at OCS seemed quite easy to me. I'm not saying that I was any smarter than my classmates, but some of them needed tutoring in various subjects because they simply had never learned good study habits. After a few weeks, seeing as how I hadn't missed any exam questions so far, some of the guys in my company started asking me to tutor them at night.

At the same time, we were learning to use Navy slang. So waste baskets became 'chit cans' because little notes and slips of paper were called 'chits.' Squared-away meant that you were perfect in whatever was being discussed. That phrase came from the olden days of square-rigged sailing ships, and it referred to the sails being correctly set for the current wind and ship's course. Another bit of slang was used for a list that one could sneak into a classroom to use for quickly looking up test answers. It was called a gouge, as in, "Who has a gouge for tomorrow's navigation test?" By the second month of our training, my friends called me The Gouge.

Background Music:

A few miles distant from the Navy's Officer Candidate School, at the Newport Folk Festival, Bob Dylan went electric in public for the first time. Walking on our nightly patrols around the base, we could hear faint sounds of the festival's music. That was when I realized what a mistake I had made in joining the Navy.

228

My dad's favorite expression



***Joe Hagerty just home
from Navy boot camp***

One of my earliest memories of my dad was when we were together in his basement workshop. He was building a new staircase that would lead down from our kitchen to the basement. I watched as he methodically marked the notches in the side stringers with a zig-zag pattern where he would make his cuts to form the stairs. From time-to-time, he would have to calculate an angle or tread length or some such, and he would do the math in pencil on the wooden stringer, which would be painted over later.

That was the first time that he amazed me with one of his many talents. And from then on, no matter what it was he

did that surprised me, when I asked, "How did you learn to do that?" he would always answer with the same expression: "It takes time, experience, and seamanship."

At this very moment, as I am writing this little memory, it is dawning on me that from the days of my earliest childhood, my dad, who has always been my hero, was pointing me toward the sea. I'm sure that it wasn't intentional on his part, but the things that I did of which he was most proud were my sailing and Navy experiences. I've now put in a lot of time in this life, and I've had as many varied experiences as most people have. But that of which I am most proud, is that I am one hell of a good seaman.

Background Music:

Rosevelt, Churchill & Stalin met at Tehran to map out a strategy for ending World War II, but it was too late to prevent my dad from being shipped to the South Pacific with the Navy. I don't remember him leaving, but I still have a clear memory of his return a few years later. That story is in Volume 1, #147.

229

Black Ice

I don't know if this is still true, but back in the late 1980's everyone who thought of herself or himself as a geek had read William Gibson's *Neuromancer* at least once. Over the years, I've read it three times myself. In addition to introducing the concept of cyberspace to the world, *Neuromancer* also began the discussion of cybersecurity and what Gibson called Intrusion Countermeasures Electronic or ICE. The highest level of data protection that his characters encountered when they were in cyberspace was called Black ICE, and anyone who dared to attempt to penetrate its security would usually experience a horrible death.

In the late 1990s, one of my jobs was that of project manager for a new security firewall service that my company intended to sell. I did everything that I could think of to convince my boss to let us name our security service Black Ice, but he rejected the idea as too

geeky and called it Garrison instead. Several years after I left that company, they passed our project on to one of their other divisions, which then promptly renamed it Black Ice.

But the black ice that I remember the best is something that automobile drivers in the Northern climes often encounter. It is a very thin, translucent sheet of ice covering a road. The ice is so thin that you can see through it; thus, a blacktop road covered in thin ice looks as if it is clear, the road just looks wet. When a car encounters black ice the results are unpredictable, as it takes only the slightest change in the direction of one's front wheels to set the car into a rapid, and very tight spin, while also sliding forward in its original direction of travel.



Black Ice

The first time that I encountered black ice was on a two-lane road between Rochelle and DeKalb, Illinois. It was in the winter of 1958, there was fresh snow on the ground, and the road had been plowed clean that morning. I had only received my driver's license a few months earlier, and this was one of my first experiences of driving in a Northern Illinois winter. No one had ever mentioned black ice to me, and so it wasn't something that I was looking out for.

As my car topped a small hill and headed downward, I hit a patch of black ice. At first, I didn't understand what was happening, but it only took a second or so for me to see that the slight sheen on the blacktop road must be ice and not melted snow.

We began a series of three or four complete spins. It may have been more, but at the time it didn't seem all that important that I concentrate on counting the number of times we spun around. All the while the car was turning in tight little circles, it was also continuing forward in the original direction we had been heading when we hit the ice.

The car was my dad's used, but charming, four-door De Soto, the same one that I totaled the following spring and wrote about in *Volume 1*, #13 of these stories. The front seat of that grand old car was a bench-type. Joanne, my girlfriend, at the time, was sitting next to me in the middle of the seat. As soon as the car began to spin, she let out a short scream and began to put her hands up. I reached up with my right hand, covered her hands, and brought them back down to her lap. I then rested my hand over hers while very calmly, saying, "Don't worry. It's just a little ice. We'll straighten up in a minute." I can't believe that I didn't display the panic that I was feeling inside.

Almost before those words were out of my mouth the patch of ice ended, the wheels got their traction back, and I was able to get the car back into our lane. Once the emergency was over, I became a real hero on Joanne's eyes. She was profuse in letting me know how cool she thought I was in that little emergency. I never told her that I actually had been just as panicked as she had been. After that, we became quite close for two years.

During my second semester in college, however, Joanne dropped out of the school that she had been attending and began talking about getting married. After becoming the first person in my family to attend college, the last thing that I was going to do was to drop out of school and get married, even if it was to the richest girl in town, who I was very much in love with.

So I turned down the job her dad offered me, and I let her know that only after I graduated, could we marry. To make a long story short, she soon dumped me for the son of one of the wealthiest farmers in the county and married him instead. The last time we spoke was in the summer of 1961. I still think of her more frequently than I probably should. Ah well, unrequited love, I don't know if it's the best, but it certainly is long lasting.

Background Music:

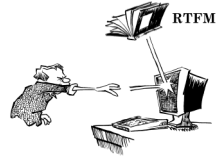
Senator John Kennedy announced that he was going to run for President. At the time, I was afraid that his candidacy would draw

unwanted attention to us Catholics.

230

RTFM

I first began working for GTE Data Services, now named Verizon Data Services, in the late 1980s when they were about to roll out a new billing system for their telephone customers. It was a massive enterprise that took several years with thousands of people writing code. About a year before the system was due to be released, GTE hired more than forty new technical writers. I was one of them. At the time, I had been working as a legal secretary for a contracting company that rented my services out to law firms in Tampa who needed someone to fill in during vacations for their regular staff. So I began working for GTE as a contract employee, which meant that I was paid as an hourly worker, thus making overtime work worthwhile.



***Read The
Fucking
Manual***

After two years, we finished writing the documentation for this massive computer system in late December. As it worked out, the print shop delivered many pallets of unbound printed documentation to our shop shortly before our holiday break at Christmas time. Being hourly employees, several of us volunteered to spend the holidays at work, putting the new documentation into six-inch binders. There were twenty-nine volumes altogether, and a complete set filled five large cardboard boxes that weighted a LOT.

It took several days for us to complete setting up and boxing this new documentation, and two of us loaded 100 sets of this monster documentation, two sets at a time, on big carts and delivered them to their designated work groups throughout the campus. It was a massive job, and we were all quite satisfied with our work as we went home on New Year's Eve.

Within two hours of arriving at work on the first morning after the holidays, I received a phone call from a person who was having a

problem getting a particular function of the new billing program to work correctly. Since I was the person who wrote that section of the documentation, he was asking me how to solve his problem rather than looking up the answer in our new documentation. Needless to say, after missing the holiday season by spending the time at work to deliver his manuals to him, I kind of lost it and instead of answering his question, which I quickly could have done, I instead shouted, "READ THE FUCKING MANUAL!" My wonderful boss, realizing that I was about to go postal, sent me home for the rest of the day . . . With pay, I should add.

Background Music:

Mikhail Gorbachev and George H.W. Bush meet and declare that the Cold War is over, but I don't think that anyone believed them. I sure didn't.

231

Major embarrassments

I'm sure that we have all had our share of being the focus of an embarrassing situation. One that still stands out clearly in my mind goes way back to 1956. I was in eighth grade. It was the end of the school year, and according to our school's tradition, our class was treated to a day in Chicago for a visit the Museum of Science and Industry in the afternoon followed by an evening at the Riverview Amusement Park.

For me, the big feature of the day's excursion was the fact that it was to be my first real date. Her name was Sandra Schabert, and she was one of our school's cheerleaders. We held hands whenever the priest who acted as our chaperone wasn't looking, and we locked eyes and smiled a lot too. Until near the end of



***The ROTO
after the floor dropped.***

that evening at Riverview, it was one of the best days of my life. Then disaster struck!

One of the rides was simply called Roto. It consisted of a large upright cylinder approximately thirty feet in diameter. When we entered the ride, there was a floor that was about halfway up the side of the barrel. Once everyone was in the cylinder, standing with our backs against the round wall, the Roto would begin spinning.

It spun so fast that the centrifugal force pressed us against the side of the cylinder. Eventually, the force pressed us so tightly against the side that we could barely lift our arms. Then the floor dropped down about ten feet with us all stuck to the side of the spinning cylinder. As the operator gradually reduced the speed of our spin, the force was reduced, and we gently slid down to the bottom, where we exited when the ride was over. It was a gut-wrenching experience.

As I exited the ride, my head and stomach still spinning, I realized that all of the fried junk food that I had been consuming no longer wanted to stay down. While everyone else was carrying on about what fun that ride had been, I was making a hasty retreat to the nearest trash can where I puked my guts out for what seemed like a long time. My friends were of no help. In fact, their first response was the release of gales of laughter. And all the while that I was throwing up and experiencing that horrible taste in my mouth, the only thought in my mind was, "I guess that I'm not going to get my first kiss tonight like I've been fantasizing about all day."

Background Music:

Above ground nuclear testing continued on Enewetak Atoll in the Pacific. Previously there had been a series of tests in the U.S. that released radioactive clouds that reached us even in Illinois. At the time there was no information to the populace about this. It wasn't until many years later that we learned that large numbers of us had been exposed to this radiation.

232

Top Secret Clearance

I graduated from Officer Candidate School as a U.S. Navy Ensign in June of 1966. (I should interject here that my first division officer often said, "All ensigns should be court marshaled for impersonating officers.") My first orders were to report aboard the USS *Hopewell* (DD-681) as the electronic material officer. Since my duties would include handling classified material, the Navy ordered a background investigation about me. What I didn't realize is how thorough these investigations are.

Before reporting aboard my destroyer, I had to go to the Electronic Material Officer school and Combat Information Center schools in San Diego. So, for a few months, I was living the good life as a young bachelor officer during a period when the war in Viet Nam was really heating up, and the vibe in San Diego at the time was gung-ho warrior mode. So when my dad called me with distress in his voice and asked, "What the hell have you done?" I was snapped out of my swaggering mood in a hurry.

What was going on in my little home town back then was a rash of phone calls and secret meetings between not just my parents' friends and my family, but among anyone and everyone that I had ever come into contact with, or so it seemed to my dad. And the laughable answer to all that activity was that there were two investigators from the Navy who were making sure that I would be a reasonable security risk. They decided I was OK, and I got the clearance.

During my time on active duty, I handled a lot of Top Secret information. And when I was the executive officer on the USS *Apache*, the top-secret safe was in my stateroom. Of course, during our ten-month cruise to investigate the loss of the USS *Scorpion*, I kept all of the classified information in my desk drawers. In the safe, I kept my private stash of scotch. But I would never do such a thing today . . . Because today my whiskey of choice is Irish!

Background Music:

The Texas Tower Massacre took place when a crazy person with a sniper rifle killed over a dozen people and injured 31 others. It was the first time I remember hearing about mass murder outside of war.

233

Tiny Bubbles

I guess that the Hawaiian singer Don Ho isn't well known anymore, but back in the day, he was one of the best-known voices on the radio. Back then, Don Ho was the first person my friends and I thought of when we heard the word Hawaii. I can still hear him croon "Pearly shells ... from the ocean ... shining in the sun." There is no way that I can describe his voice, but once you have heard him, you will know his voice anywhere. It just reeked of the sun, the sand, the ocean, and paradise.

In 1965, when I dropped out of law school to sail with Alan Villiers in a wooden, square-rigged sailing ship from California to Hawaii, Don Ho was the top entertainer in Honolulu. It was at the Duke's that he performed, the club owned by the legendary surfer Duke Kahanamoku.



Getting into Dukes for one of Don Ho's performances wasn't easy, because by then he had already made a name for himself through the visits of many tourists who saw Duke's as a mandatory stop on a Hawaiian vacation. Fortunately for me, as a part of the cast (as a stunt man) for the movie *Hawaii* that was currently being filmed starring Julie Andrews, Max von Sydow, Richard Harris, and Gene Hackman, my

shipmates and I talked ourselves into front row seats for a late performance one night.

Besides getting to see Don Ho in person, we also got to see Duke Kahanamoku himself, because he came up to the stage and did the introductions. As I remember the scene, a somewhat slow-moving old man made his way up to the stage as the room went crazy with cheers for their living legend. My friends and I were also impressed that such an old man would come out just to introduce Don Ho. Interestingly, today, I am exactly the same age as the Duke was on that night.

The club was laid out nightclub style, with a sizable semi-circular platform for the piano and accompanying musicians and singers. The tables were arranged around the piano in an expanding series of semi-circles. We were in the second row back with a direct line of sight to where Don Ho was sitting while he played and sang.

Before his first number, he announced that there were some technicians present who were going to make a recording of that evening's performance for a record that he would soon release. It was his breakout album "The Don Ho Show" featuring his most famous song, "Tiny Bubbles," and I was present when part of it was recorded. In fact, my two friends and I even were invited to come up on stage and join Don Ho, along with a few other audience members, to sing "Pearly Shells" with him. Obviously, it was a memorable night.

Background Music:

Bob Dylan had just released "Like a Rolling Stone." He was my favorite singer at the time, but he also reminded me of how little I had accomplished in life, after all, he was only one year older than me. So when he went electric the following year, I didn't feel too bad in not listening to him for a while, although I eventually got back into his music.

234

Whitewash

The old Villa Street house that I grew up in and wrote about in *Volume 1* was built in the 19th century. It had a concrete basement,

but the wooden house didn't rest directly on the basement's concrete walls, which were only four feet high. The concrete walls were extended up another four feet with large, rough, uncut rocks to provide a higher ceiling in the basement.

Every couple of years, we would have to paint that section of the house with whitewash, which is a form of paint made by mixing slaked lime with water. Not only can I still remember the way a bucket of whitewash smelled, but I can also remember that day in the basement when my dad amazed me by pouring some water into a bucket with a pile of white power in it and told me that it was paint. I don't know why that particular event has stayed with me for so long, but I can even remember where we were in the basement when my dad showed me how to make whitewash. And I also remember how satisfying it was to apply the whitewash to the lower walls of our house. That was one chore that I never minded doing.

235

Sitting on the porch



***Our front porch at
254 Villa Street, Elgin, IL***

Whenever the Villa Street house comes to mind, one of the first things that I think of are those hot summer nights when our entire family would sit out on the front porch. But after seeing a picture of it, I now realize that we all couldn't have fit on it at the same time. I do remember my brother and me sitting on the steps.

My mother and Aunt Anne would sit on the porch, and my dad and grandfather would sit in lawn chairs next to it. What is most clear in my memory, however, is the constant stream of neighbors who would stroll by. Since we lived on

the corner of Villa and Gifford streets, we would see almost everyone who lived on our block on those hot summer nights.

There was no air conditioning back then, and most of us only had one, or at the most, two little electric fans per house. August in the Chicago area isn't the most comfortable place to live. So we would all sit outside and talk about what we'd done that day. We'd just visit. Those were the days before we owned a television. On most nights there would come a time when my mother would suggest that my brother and I join her for a walk around the block too. That was what family time was like before television came into our lives, and I'm glad that I was fortunate enough to have experienced it.

236

Sealab

During my tour of duty as the executive officer of the USS *Apache*, our primary mission was that of towing the USS *Whitesands*/USS *Trieste* for her Pacific shakedown dives. Of course, there was also the ten-month deployment to the Atlantic on the search for the sunken submarine USS *Scorpion*.

Additionally, we towed targets for destroyers to use for practice with their big guns. When practice shells from the distant destroyers would bracket the target that we were towing astern, it definitely brought back some unpleasant memories about being bracketed by shore fire in Viet Nam,

One of my favorite operations was when we took one of the Navy's top divers out to sea for a test of a new free diving technique the Navy was developing. This diver's name was John Risk if I remember correctly, and if that was actually his name, then he fits it well. I don't remember how

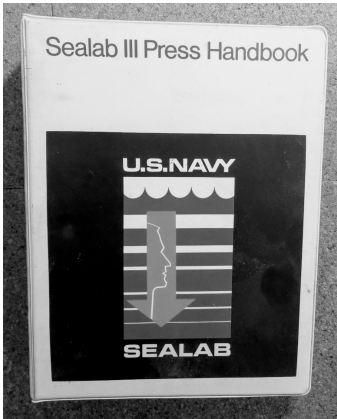


I took this photo of Sealab III at San Clemente Island in 1969.

deep he went, but when he surfaced, he went directly into the decompression chamber that we were carrying on board.

The day before John's test dive we had to pick him up at San Clemente Island, just off the San Diego coast, where he had been staying with other divers who were getting ready to restart the Sealab experiments. The Sealab project began in 1964, and according to their Press Handbook, "The SEALAB experiment is being conducted to evaluate techniques and equipment being developed to further Navy operational capabilities in the deep ocean environment." What they were doing was experimenting with saturation diving. In other words, these men, who were called Aquanauts, would spend twelve consecutive days at a depth of 600 feet, and their home during that time was Sealab III, which was actually just a refurbished Sealab II.

When we anchored at San Clemente to pick up Risk, he was aboard Sealab, which hadn't yet been submerged for the experiment. I went over in the captain's gig to pick him up and was fortunate to be given a tour of the inside of Sealab. The main thing that I remember thinking as I moved through that crowded, sewer-tube-looking thing, was that there was no way I would ever volunteer to spend twelve days in this little tin can, even if it was still floating on the surface. These guys indeed had the right stuff.



I don't know why, but I've been carrying this around for almost 50 years.

A few months later, after we had left San Diego on our voyage to the Atlantic in support of the *Trieste's* investigation of the *Scorpion* loss, we received word that one of the Sealab divers died during the set-up phase and that the entire project had been canceled. I never heard any more about

John Risk, but I'm sure that he must have broken the Navy's record for a free dive. At least I like to think so.

Background Music:

"Hey Jude" was at the top of the record charts, and it eventually became one of my favorite songs. At the time there was no such thing as a portable record player that we could take on our ship. Eight-track tapes were just being introduced, but I didn't know anyone who owned one. So my music listening was restricted to the radio for the most part.

237

Lieutenant Commander Hagerty

I was fortunate during my time in the Navy to achieve a relatively rapid rise through the ranks. When I left for Viet Nam on the *Hopewell*, I was an ensign. By the time I returned home, I was a Lieutenant Junior Grade. About the same time as I returned from the Scorpion search, I was promoted to full Lieutenant, which was my rank for most of my time during reserve duty. I was promoted to lieutenant commander shortly before my required time in the reserves was about to expire.

I guess the fact that I had served in a war zone on a destroyer and had been the executive officer and navigator on one of the Navy's important missions, coupled with the fact that I had just become a lawyer, caused the Navy to think that I was a good asset. What they didn't realize, however, is that my attitude caused me to be completely unfit to continue as a naval officer. Not only did I resent authority, I thought that most of the things we were required to do on our weekend drills were ridiculous.

Nonetheless, I was proud and excited about my promotion. Unfortunately, I never got to wear a lieutenant commander's uniform. In fact, it was the uniform requirement for reserve duty that actually was the direct cause of me



***Ltjg Hagerty,
Executive Officer,
USS Apache, mid-
Atlantic 1969***

leaving the service. You see, at that moment in time, I was a new lawyer with a wife and three children. Financially I was barely keeping my head above water. However, my promotion required that I get new uniforms to show my new rank, and I simply couldn't afford to buy any new clothes. I guess that it is fair to say that I was too poor to stay in the Navy.

My promotion went through before my discharge papers became effective. So from time-to-time, I make a call to USAA, my insurance company, just to hear them ask, "What can we help you with today, Commander Hagerty?" That always brings a smile to my face.

238

A robbery in Dublin

I've only been robbed once, and it was in Ireland.

When my youngest son graduated from high school, I treated him, and myself, with a trip to Ireland. At the time I was quite short on funds, but I had saved for months, paid cash for our plane tickets, and took the rest of what I had saved in the form of traveler's checks. The IRS had just begun confiscating a large portion of my salary, and all of my credit cards had been canceled. (That's another story, but it's much too long to include here.)



***The coffee tin that I now
keep my drugs in.***

Our trip began in Dublin with an exciting drive from the airport to our hotel, because not only did I have to adjust to driving on the left side of the road, the car had a stick shift that I had to use with a hand that had never shifted on that side before. Then there were those damn roundabouts that I had trouble navigating out of, but we made it.

The first two days were great fun, and on Sunday morning we decided to have breakfast at Bewleys, where I bought a tin of coffee to bring home. I parked our car in what I later learned was a dangerous neighborhood, and when we returned after our excellent breakfast, we discovered that our car had been broken into and our bags were gone.

Stupid me, I left our plane tickets and most of my travelers' checks in my bag. So there we were, no plane tickets, no traveler's checks, and no clothes. After wasting most of the day at the police station and the American Express office, we went to the airport to report the stolen tickets. That was when I first learned that (at least back in 1990) a lost or stolen airline ticket can't be refunded until six months after it is reported missing.

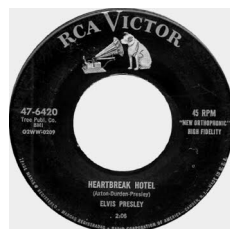
For me, the rest of the trip was consumed with me worrying about how we were going to get home. I had no credit cards, and very little cash would be left from the travelers' checks, which fortunately had been replaced. My son, Dan, didn't seem to be worried and was having a great time. So I didn't let on how concerned I was about what was going to happen when we ended our stay in Ireland.

To make a long story short, I phoned my ex-wife who immediately bought two tickets for us to return. It took me the full six months to pay her back, but she never once complained about my lack of fiscal responsibility. However, here's the kicker. When I apologized to Dan for messing up our trip, he just laughed, because according to some checklist that he and his friends were keeping about what it takes to become an interesting person, well, being robbed was worth a lot of points. And being robbed in Europe doubled the score. So for him, it was a win. For me, it was the source of nightmares for several years.

239

Record stores

One of my favorite teenage memories is of Saturday afternoons my friends and I spent at the record store next to Pardi's Soda Fountain in downtown Elgin, Illinois. I no longer remember the store's name, but I still have a clear memory of what it looked like inside. It wasn't as large as the old record stores that I've seen in pictures on the Internet. This one had a long counter that ran almost the entire width of the room, and behind it was where the 45rpm records were kept.



These were the old seven-inch vinyl disks that had a large inch-and-a-half hole in the center. These records had two advantages over the more expensive 33 1/3's that today are considered the perfect vinyl listening experience. As I mentioned, they were considerably less expensive, and instead of the LP technology used by the 33 1/3's which provided a little over twenty minutes of music, the 45s only had one song on each side. The big advantage, however, was that the players for the 45s provided a center stacking pole that allowed us to put ten of them on at a time, which was important when we were making out and didn't want to stop after each song and place a new record on the player.

Before we bought a record, we would first play it in one of the booths that lined the two side walls of the record store. These were small, closet-like affairs with a big glass window in the door so the store employees could watch to be sure that we weren't stealing anything. As I recall, we were only allowed to take two records at a time into a listening booth, and we had to check them out from a clerk behind the long counter who would retrieve the tunes we asked for.

Two people could fit comfortably in the listening booths, and a third person could also squeeze in without a problem. So we would check out a couple of records, go into a booth, listen to them, then

either buy them or return them for a different record. By taking turns to buy a record, three of us could listen to a couple dozen songs in an hour and only purchase three if we timed things right. Every once in a while, the store manager thought that we were abusing our free listening privileges and bar us from the store for a couple of weeks, but that didn't happen very often.

It was on a cold January day in 1956, in our town's record store, that I heard Elvis Presley sing "Heartbreak Hotel" for the first time. I bought it and still have that record today, along with a few dozen other classics that I bought when they were first released. Recently, my grandson has become a fan of vinyl records. I sent him a few of my old 33 1/3s that I still had, and the next time I come across the box with my old 45s, I plan on sending them to him. It really feels good to know that one of my descendants also has a love of analog music. All is not lost.

240

The Rialto fire

When I was thirteen years old, there were three movie theaters in my hometown of Elgin, Illinois: the Grove, the Crocker, and the Rialto. All three of them were on our town's main street, as was the J.C. Penney store where my dad worked.

One Sunday morning, we heard that the Rialto was on fire. So my mother, brother, and I walked downtown with my dad who had keys to the Penney store where we could go up to the top floor and watch the firemen at work. That was the first big fire I ever witnessed, and the sounds, the smell, and the excitement have never left me. However, it wasn't until a decade later, when I went through the Navy's firefighting school in San



The 1956 fire at the Rialto theater in Elgin, Illinois

Diego, that I first realized what incredibly dangerous and challenging work those brave firemen (and they were all men back then) had to endure to save our downtown structures, even if they couldn't save the theater.

At the time there was some talk of rebuilding the Rialto after the fire, but that never happened. So for the rest of my days in Elgin, there were only two movie theaters. For me, that wasn't a hardship, though, because my weekly gig of passing out fliers at school that announced the coming week's movies was with the Crocker, whose manager was a friend of my dad's.

Background Music

Although I wasn't aware of it at the time, the French troops were in the process of pulling out of Viet Nam.

241

My first time at sea

Although I had already done a lot of sailing on lakes in the Midwest, on Galveston Bay, and in the Gulf of Mexico, it wasn't until I signed on a square-rigged sailing ship under the command of Alan Villiers that I at long last experienced my first time on an ocean; the Pacific Ocean!

In *Volume 1*, I wrote about a few experiences during our crossing and while filming the movie *Hawaii*, but I've never told anyone about my first few hours at sea.

On the afternoon of April 21, 1965, my college friend, Dan Brosnan, dropped me off at the pier in San Pedro where the *Wandia* (later renamed *Carthaginian*) was tied up. All that I had to my name was what I carried in my sea bag and \$1.37 in my wallet. I had never worked on a ship before, and I didn't know a single person I would be living and working with on our voyage to Hawaii. On top of that, I had no idea how I was going to earn enough to buy a plane ticket to get me back to the states after our voyage. In hindsight, I now see that this reckless streak has been following me around all my life.

As soon as I reported aboard, I learned that I had been assigned to the starboard watch and that they were already at work preparing the ship for the next day's departure. I quickly threw my sea bag on a bunk in the forecastle and joined my watchmates, all of whom had been sailing together for several years, in addition to working together restoring the ship *Balclutha* at the maritime park in San Francisco. I was not only the new guy, but I was also a "yacht club sailor," a type they disdained. It was a stressful first day for me.

Early the next morning, as we were preparing to get underway, an obviously important 80-year-old man came aboard. He was Captain Jorgensen and was perhaps the most famous of the old salts then living in the L.A. area. Not only had he been a ship's captain for many years, but he had also been the senior ship's pilot in the Los Angeles Harbor Service for 30 years. And it was to be his honor to be the pilot who officially "swung" our ship's compass that morning to ensure it's accuracy for our month-long voyage.

Not long after Captain Jorgensen came aboard, as he was nostalgically inspecting our ship, he saw me coiling a long piece of heavy rope on the deck near mid-ships. Being a "yacht club sailor," I was screwing it up and coiling the line the wrong way. In a very kind and grandfatherly way, he stopped his inspection, came over to me, and taught me the proper way to coil large lines. I was just 22 years old at the time, and not only was he 80 years old, he also had 65 years of seamanship on me. He watched me follow his instructions for a minute, patted me on the shoulder, and told me that I had the makings of a good sailor. To me, that was worth more than earning four years of straight A's in college (which I didn't receive, BTW).



***Captain Villiers with
Lorenzo on the helm***

After we calibrated our compass, Captain Jorgensen left in a motor launch, and we headed out to sea. During the compass swing,

Captain Villiers was on the ship's wheel so that he could personally validate the compass corrections necessary to guide us to one of the most remote islands on Earth and across thousands of miles of empty ocean. As our ship headed out the channel to sea, Captain Villiers called out, "Hagerty, come aft and take the helm."

My shipmates were astounded, as I was the least qualified of any of them to be serving on board this ship. But the fact that Alan Villiers had chosen me as his first helmsman for this voyage somehow made me OK, even though I was a yacht club sailor.

And so it was that my first experience of what it is like to be at sea, and to feel the swell of the big waves as they passed under our ship, took place when I was at the helm of a square-rigged sailing ship on the Pacific Ocean. It was one of my first perfect moments.

242

Bath time

When we were young, my brother and I would take our weekly bath together. Quite often, this would also involve a great deal of laughter, splashing, and horsing around by the two of us.



***Mike & Larry taking
a bath circa 1953***

One time, during our dad's fling with shooting 8mm movies of the family, he hooked up this long electrical contraption that held the four big floodlights required for taking movies indoors, and he had my mother throw a glass of cold water on us. This, of course, caused Mike and me to jump out of the tub to get away from the ice water being thrown our way. That old movie is still out in my garage, deteriorating, along with all of the other films that my dad took during those years.

I once thought about having those old films digitized before they completely fall apart. It's the ones of my Grandpa Fox that I remember the best, and there were quite a few reels with him in

them. However, after thinking about it for a while, I realized that I am the only person alive who knew any of the people in those old black and white movies. So there doesn't seem to be a good reason to digitize a bunch of films just for me to see it one more time. For anyone else, it would only be a bunch of people back during the Eisenhower years who had no inkling that control of the American Empire would one day fall into the hands of our own Caligula.

Background Music

Even as young as I was at the time, I remember my parents talking about the fact that President Truman had just announced that the U.S. had developed a hydrogen bomb. At the time we had no idea about how significantly more powerful it was than the ones that we dropped on civilians in Japan.

243

Brothers

I go through a wide range of emotions whenever I think of my brother, which is quite often, actually. Until I began high school, we spent a lot of time together. There were no other children in our neighborhood, and so we depended upon one another for a playmate.

Some of my fondest childhood memories of my brother and I are from those rainy days when we couldn't go outside and play. Mother would allow us to build forts out of boxes and chairs in the dining room, and we would build tunnels using blankets. We had some great times together even though I was almost five years older than him.

It was our age difference, unfortunately, that caused us to drift apart once I went to high school. I was on the football team and the basketball team, active in the science fairs and other extracurricular activities, all of which meant that I no longer had much free time at home to play with my little brother. After I left for college in



***My little brother
using my back
for a pillow***

September of 1960, I never lived at home again, and my brother and I drifted even further apart.

However, there were still a few things that held us together. I returned from my service in the American war in Viet Nam during his senior year in college and made it a point to let him know that I would support him if he left the country to avoid the draft. A week after he graduated from Notre Dame, he left for Spain with my backing. It caused a massive rift in our family that never truly ended. Ironically, he had a medical condition that classified him as 4F, physically unfit for military service.

I could go on for another hundred pages telling stories about my little brother. In my novel, *The Genesis Generation*, he is the inspiration for the archivist at Sacromonte Abbey, which is a position he once held. He died in September of 2010 at the age of 63, the same age at which our father had died. We were having an email argument at the time. I never got to say goodbye.

244

Playing with lead and mercury

During the early 1950s, my dad's only hobby was fishing, which he didn't get to do very often, because he worked six days a week at the J.C. Penney store in Elgin.



Larry & Mike fishing

The two things I remember best about my dad and fishing are the smelly, rotten chicken liver bait he used and the lead sinkers that he made himself. As I recall, the section of the Fox River where we usually fished had a lot of tangled roots on the bottom, and we were always losing our

hooks and sinkers when our line snagged. So my dad mass produced sinkers for his friends who often joined him on a summer night after work.

I was really fascinated watching my dad melt bars of lead in a little make-shift ladle he would heat over the gas stove in the basement room that we used for canning. It was fascinating to watch the metal melt and flow so smoothly into the little molds that he used to make his sinkers. So I decided to try it myself.

I was around 12 years old at the time and was seeing myself as some kind of super private detective. I called myself The Lone Wolf. (Obviously, my penchant for being a hermit goes back a long way.) As part of my detective gear, I designed a coin that featured a wolf howling to the sky. After making a drawing, I transferred it to a block of wood and carved in my design. Then I melted some lead and poured it into my mold, which promptly caught fire and ended my coinage activities for a while.

One of the other things of my dad's that I loved to play with was a little bottle of mercury that he had acquired for some reason I no longer remember. He would let me pour it out in a saucer and mess around with it. If you've never played with mercury, you have no idea how much fun it can be. Unfortunately, mercury is highly toxic. But back then the general population didn't seem to be aware of that fact.

I guess that I dodged another bullet there because when Frank Zappa died, we learned that the cause of his cancer was mercury poisoning. Apparently, his dad also brought some mercury home for him to play with. Unfortunately for Zappa, his dad had a much larger bottle of mercury than mine did.

Background Music

Although it was a bit too late for me, this was around the same time that the first mass trials of Jonas Salk's polio vaccine were being conducted. I had already recovered from a mild case of polio by then.

245

A doorknob and a seashell



In my first two stories in *Volume 1* of these chronicles, I mentioned two items that I keep on my desk: A doorknob and a seashell. To me, these two items are very precious, but they will just be meaningless bits of clutter that are left when I die. So I want to memorialize them here.

The doorknob is from the front door of the house that I grew up in; 254 Villa Street, Elgin, Illinois. As a child, I was always taking things apart to see how they worked, and more than once, it took my dad's help to restore some of my projects back to working order. So it was quite early in my life that I noticed two small screw heads recessed into the brass doorknob on our front door. I can remember many times when I tried to remove those little screws, but I never could budge them. Years later, after my dad died, I found our old doorknob under his workbench. It was in the box that a new doorknob with a lock had been in when he replaced it so that my Aunt Anne would be able to lock her front door after we moved to Rochelle. Upon close inspection, it is quite apparent that there is no screw in that doorknob. It was etched into the brass as part of its decorative pattern, but it sure fooled me for a while.



***The Hagerty's
circa 1943***

Once I took that old doorknob with me to an ayahuasca circle and held it during the entire ceremony. I intended to connect with the spirits of the countless friends and relatives who had at one time or another touched that precious piece of brass. You can imagine how

disappointed I was at the end of our ceremony, and I had received not even a little wisp of air suggesting any connection whatsoever between the doorknob and a dead ancestor. But I still treasure this old memory of the house where my earliest dreams came into being.

The seashell, as you can see from the photo, is about the same size as the doorknob. When my dad returned from the South Pacific, after the end of World War II, he brought with him a big bag of seashells that he had collected on the beaches of Manus Island. While most of the shells that he brought back were small enough to be made into simple jewelry, there were a few large shells as well. I no longer know what happened to most of them, although I think that my ex-wife may have some of them. And there were several large snail shells as well, including the one that is now on my desk.

I also held that shell during an ayahuasca ceremony, but again, it brought up no mystical connection. However, during that ceremony, I did spend a lot of time thinking about my dad and all that he has meant to me. Not many people are fortunate enough to have a father like mine. Sadly, even my own children didn't have a dad as great as mine was. And for that, there is no one to blame but myself. Don't get me wrong, I did OK as a dad, but it was nowhere on the level of OK that I had with my own dad. I miss him every day.

246

A ship's figurehead



Before and After

which was to be used in the movie *Hawaii*, the figurehead had not yet been mounted on the bow. Instead, it was in a crate in the hold. After

our arrival in Honolulu, we took it out of its crate and bolted it to the ship's prow.

At the same time, the ship's name on the stern was painted over and changed to *Carthaginian*, which was the name that James Michener used in his novel for the ship that carried the missionaries to the island. And so it was the head of a *Carthaginian* warrior that was used as the figurehead.

After we bolted it to the hull, seeing as how it was only painted in a pinkish undercoat, we decided to paint a mustache on it with some Stockholm tar that we used to preserve the rigging that went through the dead-eyes and held our masts in place. Needless to say, the movie director failed to see the humor in this and had it repainted in more appropriate colors. The left half of the photo above is how it looked after we added the mustache, and the right half is a picture that I took by crawling out on the bowsprit while we were at sea to see how it would look in the movie. Unfortunately, the colorful beauty of that large carving doesn't show up very well in black and white.

After the filming of the movie was finished the ship eventually became a floating museum in the harbor at Lahaina on the island of Maui. One fourth of July, so I am told, the ship's owner motored it out to sea for a short cruise, but on his attempt to return to the harbor he hit the reef and sunk it. Some divers were able to salvage the figurehead, however, and today it is on display in a t-shirt shop in Lahaina, from which my youngest granddaughters sent me a photo.

247

Indian Joe

One of my dad's good friends was a Native American named Joe, which was also my dad's name. My dad called his friend 'Indian Joe,' as did everyone else I assumed. When my dad left to serve with the Navy in the South Pacific during World War II, he arranged for Indian Joe to be the handyman around our house. Although my

grandfather was still alive at that time, he was already in his mid-70s and wasn't up to household chores that required heavy lifting.

I have some clear memories of going to Indian Joe's service station with my dad after the war, where we would just hang out while my dad and Joe swapped stories. But my most explicit memory of Indian Joe is from Christmas time in 1944. Somehow, my family had saved enough money to buy me a tricycle, but it came unassembled. So my mother called Indian Joe, who brought his toolbox and put my tricycle together for me. From that day on, I have always had a very warm place in my heart for Native Americans.



**Little Larry
Christmas 1944**

Background Music

On December 18, 1944, three U.S. destroyers, the Hull, Spence, and Monaghan were sunk in a typhoon in the Pacific. All three of these ships were of the same class that I served on. In December of 1967, on our way home after leaving the coast of Viet Nam, we also encountered a major typhoon. There were several times during that storm when our ship would list far over to one side or the other when my shipmates and I would recall that 1944 storm in which our sister ships were lost. It was a tense few days. And here's a coincidence: That date on which the three ships were lost in 1944 is the same day, December 18th, on which I met my first wife in 1964, and, sadly, the day in 1975 on which my dad died.

248

Military draft

Lately, I've been going through a few old boxes that contain some of the detritus of my life. Basically, I'm attempting to discard most of it so that my family doesn't have to waste a lot of time trying to figure out why I saved this or that item. One of the loose pieces of paper that I came across was my dad's induction notice.

Here are what, to me at least, are its most relevant details.

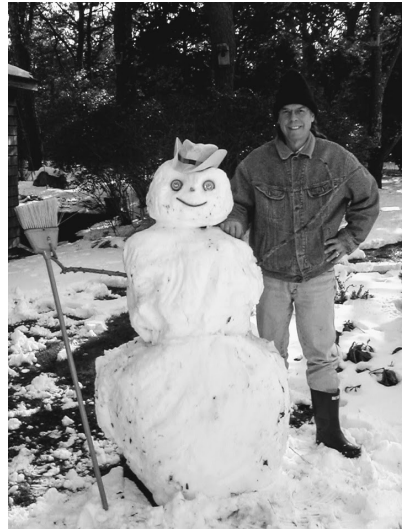
- He had just celebrated his 31st birthday two weeks earlier
- Although he was married and had a child, they drafted him anyway
- The notice didn't say whether he was being drafted into the Army or the Navy (it turned out to be the Navy)
- He was to report for duty seven days **before** Christmas 1943
- He was to report to the local train station, but there was no indication where the train would be taking him
- The date of the notice is December 7, 1943, which was exactly two years after Pearl Harbor was attacked
- The day he was to report was December 18, 1943. In 1975, on December 18th, my father died. He was only 63 years old, which is the age I was at when I began podcasting from the Psychedelic Salon.

249

Snowmen

One of my favorite childhood memories is of making snowmen. In the Fifties, when the Chicago area snowfalls were more abundant than it seems they are today, my mother would also encourage my brother and me to create an entire snow-family. So we would make a snowman, two snow-women (for my mother and Aunt Anne), and two snow-kids for my brother and me. Unfortunately, film for cameras wasn't a luxury that we could afford at the time, and so there are no photos of these snow extravaganzas.

While my dad was still alive, my wife and I took our children to



***Lorenzo's last snowman -
Amagansett, NY 2003***

Illinois one December to celebrate Christmas with my dad and mother. Luckily, there was one small snowfall that left enough snow for us to make a tiny little snowman with our children. But to be honest, it was a pathetic representation of what I thought a snowman should be.

In early 2003, while house sitting on Long Island, we had a significant snowfall. At least it was bigger than any snow storm I had experienced for the previous several decades. And it was enough snow for me to make one last snowman. But, alas, I didn't have any children (other than my inner self) to share it with. Considering how long it had been since the last time I built a snowman, however, I think that it turned out quite well.

Background Music

The Space Shuttle Columbia disintegrated during reentry into the Earth's atmosphere, killing all seven astronauts aboard.

250

My mother's ashes

After my mother died, my wife and I took her ashes to be buried in a grave next to my dad's, where he was 'laid to rest' (now that's a stupid expression) in 1975. The cemetery sits on a high bluff from which the Fox River may be seen.

When my dad died, the Navy furnished a flag and grave marker, since he was a veteran. I'm sure that he would have been pleased to know that his gravestone recognizes him as a naval petty officer second class, which was a rapid promotion for someone who was already 31 years old when he was drafted.

The flag that draped his coffin has had an interesting history. During my days as the host of "Big Brother's Latest Lies," my weekly call-in television program in Tampa, Florida, I used that flag as the backdrop in my studio. For the past seven years, it has also been the main backdrop for the annual patriotic extravaganza that the first graders in my granddaughters' school put on. Recently I donated

a new flag to their school to use in place of my dad's flag, which I hope will one day wind up somewhere that in some small way will memorialize his sacrifices and those of his comrades-in-arms. Of course, this has nothing to do with U.S. patriotism on my part, because, among other things, I have refused to recite the pledge of allegiance since 1971, but that's another story.

At the time we buried my mother's ashes, the towns nearest to the cemetery had become somewhat dangerous due to gang violence. As a result, in addition to my wife and me, only four of my relatives felt safe enough to make it to her burial. On top of that, at the time, I was deep into some misguided image of myself as a shaman. So rather than wear the traditional suit and tie, as did our family patriarch, my cousin Ed, I wore a native shirt that I bought in Palenque, Mexico.

After we had a little family ceremony in the Catholic tradition, the rest of our small crew retreated to their cars, and I stayed behind and held what I then thought of as a more traditional end of life ceremony, complete with ritual tobacco brought back from Peru. Before personally lowering the urn with her ashes into the grave, I sprinkled in some dirt that my friend Katie Russell had brought to me that she had scraped up near the grave of James Joyce in Ireland. Irish Soil!



***Lorenzo with cousin Peg,
my Aunt Ellen, cousin Ed,
& my cousin Kris***

While my mother may not have appreciated that gesture, I knew that her own father, my grandpa, Dan Fox, would have been overjoyed at my gesture. In the end, this little act only has significance for me, but it remains one of my best efforts so far to live up to Grandpa Fox's expectations of me.

I still have the last half of that little vial of Irish soil, and I hope that after I die, my children will pour that into my grave as well. I've instructed them to have my ashes buried in the River Valley Memorial Gardens in West Dundee, Illinois, next to my father and mother's graves. It just seems so lonely for them to be the only members of our family to be buried there, and so I want my ashes to be near them.

On top of that, I think that it would be absolutely fantastic if on August 11th of each year one or two nice souls visit our graves, smoke a joint, and know that the Hagerty family enjoyed some wonderful days around here. The Fox River Valley was a great place to grow up.

251

Joe and Larry



In December 1967, not long after the end of the Summer of Love, our ship stopped in Hong Kong on our way home after leaving the gun line in Viet Nam. The main reason for the stop was to allow the crew some liberty in a port where everything was far less expensive than it was in the States.

The other thing that took place and truly amazed me were the laborers who worked for a lady called Hong Kong Mary. It seemed that she had some kind of exclusive right to furnish people who would repaint the exterior of our ship from stem to stern during our brief stay in port. To say the least, it was a tremendous job, and it had to be completed in about three days. So Mary brought over 50 workers on board, and they worked around the clock. When we left port a few days later, our little destroyer looked as snappy as the day she was launched in 1943. The most amazing part of working with

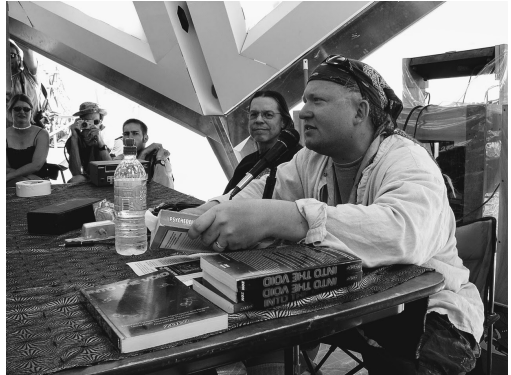
Hong Kong Mary was the only payment she required was that we give her all of the garbage our cooks discarded while we were in port. At least that's the story we were told.

One of my purchases in Hong Kong was of two coffee mugs, one for my dad and one for me. On one side of my dad's cup was an enlisted man's anchor. My cup had an officer's crest. It was the opposite sides of those cups, however, that was their main attraction. As you can see, it featured a drawing of Snoopy from the Peanuts cartoon strip. Snoopy was resting on the top of his dog house and saying, "Fuck it!" My dad really loved that mug, and he used it at work until he died. Today, when I use my cup, I see my dad's smiling face and hear him saying, "Yeah, fuck it!"

252

The first Palenque Norte talk

On August 27, 2003, the first of the Palenque Norte Lectures was held at the Burning Man Festival. The talks were hosted by the Aetheria Village theme camp, which featured a dozen or more little structures that looked somewhat like igloos with pointed roofs. Of course, building a house made of ice isn't a good idea for a party in the desert, and so these little buildings were made of folded cardboard.



***Lorenzo looks on as Jon Hanna
delivers the very first
Palenque Norte Lecture***

My wife and I arrived on the playa on Friday before the festival officially opened. We came early to help the good people of Aetheria Village build their little community. The structure that they initially allocated for Palenque

Norte was an open-air affair that consisted primarily of a dome supported by struts but with no walls filling in the sides.

The night before the first lecture was to be held, our 'conference center' was still far from complete. So we put out the word that we needed more help in folding and assembling our dome. One of the people who answered our call was Jon Hanna, who was also scheduled to be our first speaker. In other words, Jon had to help build the lecture hall for his talk. Few public speakers have been so dedicated.



So it came to pass that Jon Hanna delivered the first Palenque Norte Lecture, and it was titled "Drug Inspired Metaphysical Concepts." What we hadn't planned for was how many people would show up during a Burning Man afternoon to listen to a lecture. Before

then there had never been an entire series of lectures, conference-style, held on the playa. The popularity of this new form of a gift to the citizens of Black Rock City warmed the cockles of our hearts (whatever a cockle is).

Background Music

On that very same day, August 27, 2003, Mars made its closest approach to Earth in nearly 60,000 years, and it made for spectacular viewing on the playa all that week.

253

Family music nights

Over many years of my childhood, on at least one night a week, our family would gather around the piano where my mother would play songs, and we all would sing. As I grew older, I was shocked to learn that this wasn't true of my friends' families as well.

I can still remember my Grandpa Fox, my mother's father, singing his favorite Irish tunes in his booming Irish brogue, while tears streamed down his cheeks.



Lorenzo singing, mother playing, children watching

Years later, I was able to introduce my two young children to the family music circle when we visited my parents one Christmas season. During my Notre Dame sailing team days, our team would stay at my parents' house at Thanksgiving time. They lived only about 40 miles from the Chicago Yacht Club where the annual Timmy Angston Regatta was held for the Midwest Collegiate Sailing Association, to which I eventually was elected vice-commodore.

On Thanksgiving night, before the regatta's official activities began, my mother and dad would prepare a big feast for us. After we ate, we would gather around the piano, and my mother would play songs that we all could sing along to. Honestly, I can't see college students doing that today. It now seems like an Ozzie and Harriet 1950s routine of some pretend family.



My mother playing her piano during the 1940s

One of the things that took place at every MCSA regatta was the Saturday night party, where a lot of singing took place. Keep in mind, back then there were no boom boxes or other kinds of easily portable music players. So we usually depended on a few guitar players for our accompanists.

Of course, many of our sailing songs were too off-color to ask my mother to play, but she had a box full of sheet music featuring songs that we had all grown up listening to, in other words, it was our parents' music. Being quite drunk, of course, made any kind of song fun to sing.

On one of these occasions, Tim Maloney went downtown, stole an empty aluminum beer keg, and brought it home for my mother to use for her piano bench. That old keg was still in the basement when my mother sold the house after my dad died. What beautiful memories that old keg evoked in me when I took it back to Vopner's Tavern and apologized for my friend who had stolen it over a dozen years earlier.

I should add that my mother's last two years of high school were spent at an upscale girls' boarding school. Our cousin, Sister Julian, was the mother superior and principal at that very Catholic school, and she gave my mother a full room and board scholarship with the provision that she played the piano for all of the school's events. Because of this, the family got together and bought her the piano that she continued to play her entire life, and to which the Notre Dame Sailing Team once sang along.

For around 20 years, in the 1970s and 80s, my mother volunteered at the state mental hospital in Elgin. Each week she would take her music books with her and would play the piano for two hours in their recreation room, where the patients could sing and dance to the music. Some of the stories that she told me about the reception she received from these unfortunate people, who had little in their lives to look forward to, bring tears to my eyes. Not long before she moved to Florida, the hospital staff gave her an award for her volunteer work, which totaled several thousand hours of playing the piano.

254

Aunt Anne

Where to start is my question here. My Aunt Anne was my mother's oldest sister and, in essence, my backup mother. During and after World War II, my mother, dad, and I lived with my Grandpa Fox, along with Aunt Anne, who never married. During my grade school years, my mother suffered from severe migraine headaches that often kept her in bed much of



***Anne, Lorenzo (16 mos. old), & Ruth
Christmas 1943***

the time. So, after Anne came home from a day teaching school herself, she would tutor my little brother and me. I credit her with whatever academic success I've had.

In the summer of 1930, along with two other school teachers, Anne drove her 1926 Pontiac, complete with a rumble seat, from Elgin, Illinois to Yellowstone National Park and back. For the most part, the three of them camped out along the way. Here is her diary entry for Monday, July 14, 1930:

Left Freida's house at 8 o'clock. Made 321 miles. Arrived in Brookings S. Dakota by 5 o'clock. First night of camping. Celeste was cook, had a dandy supper and big appetites. Quite cozy in our



tent. Nice light in tent for reading, etc. We say we are going to get up at four in morning. Wonder if we will.

My mother put together a beautiful scrapbook from the photos, journals, and other mementos from that trip of Anne's, and I've put it online if you are interested in looking through it. Unfortunately, the URL is rather unwieldy:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/SSUSCABCzfrthrP68>

Also in that album are some news clippings about her work and about the time that the Schaumburg School District named a school after her. It is a grade school and is still a place of learning for young children. For many years, Anne taught at the only grade school in Schaumburg, teaching all eight grades in a one-room school-house. I wrote about that in *Volume 1*, including the story about the time I burned down the boys' outhouse.



I have been told that it was very unusual for a school to be named after someone who was still actively teaching, but that is how



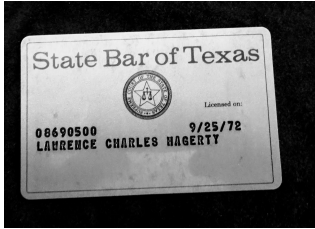
important her work had been to several generations of Schaumburg residents. And so it came to pass that there is now an Anne W. Fox school in Cook County, Illinois.

My favorite picture of Anne is one that shows a big teaching-clock in the background. My dad made that clock for her, and during the summers she would bring it home and store it in the basement of the Villa Street house. My daughter, who is now over 50 years old, still feels terrible about the time when, as a five-

year-old, she was playing with it and broke the clock's minute hand. Of course, my dad was able to fix it. You'll be hearing a lot more about my Aunt Anne in future stories.

255

A September 25th synchronicity



Although Judge Thomas Stovall, who was a good friend of mine from my days teaching sailing at the Houston Yacht Club, actually swore me into the Texas State Bar during late August of 1972 in a private ceremony in his courtroom, it wasn't until the following September 25th that the Bar Association officially recognized me as a licensed attorney.

My 'official' swearing-in ceremony took place at the LBJ Library in Austin, Texas. The library had only opened a year earlier, and it was the first, and only, time that I was ever there. My only memory of the event was being in an auditorium with a few hundred other new lawyers. However, I also remember seeing, somewhere in the library, a re-creation of the Oval Office as it appeared in LBJ's days as president. Being a Viet Nam vet, I wasn't a big admirer of Lyndon Johnson. In fact, I detested him and resented being sworn into the bar in his library.

It was only a few moments ago, when I took that photo of my bar card, that I noticed the date that I was officially admitted to the bar: September 25, 1972. Until now, that date had never registered with me, but as it turned out, that day 38 years later was one of the saddest days of my life.

You see, on September 25, 2010, my little brother Mike, then known as Miguel Jose Hagerty-Fox, died. He had spent his entire adult life in Spain. He died in Granada, his favorite city on Earth. I don't know where he is buried, and I have lost contact with his widow, whom I've never met. We tried to establish an email

correspondence after Miguel died, but Paca doesn't speak English, and I don't speak Spanish. So our communications were strained at best.

The last time that Miguel and I were together was when his first wife, Marita, was still alive. I stayed with them in Granada for a week or so, and a few minutes before I left Marita took a picture of Miguel



Miguel & Lorenzo

the last time we looked into one another's eyes and me facing one another, to show off our ponytails. I can still remember him telling me that the next time we met his ponytail would be longer than mine. In fact, it's the last thing I remember hearing him say. It was on the 13th of August in 1997. After that, email was the only way we were able to communicate. Miguel was a brilliant and sometimes cantankerous man. Nonetheless, I miss him terribly and think about him every day.

256

The 1960 Notre Dame Student Manual

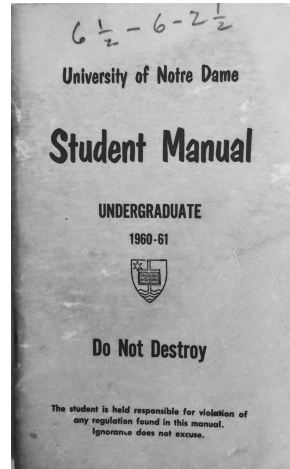
The first thing that I thought of when I came across the university student manual from my first year in college was an old cartoon that was once was passed around many college dorm rooms. It was a cartoon of a desert crossroads with a rusting, cobweb-covered old Model T ford sitting at one corner. In the car was a skeleton, which was also covered in cobwebs. On the side of the road was a sign that simply said STOP. I've always loved that old cartoon. Then I found my student manual, and in big red letters on

the cover it says, "Do Not Destroy." I obey signs, so I guess that stupid little book is going to be with me right up to the end.

Of course, I had to glance through it to see if the insanity of the rules back then was as bad as I remembered it to be. Spoiler Alert: It was even more insane than I thought.

For one thing, there was Morning Check, and I quote:

Every campus student must make morning check personally and fully dressed three times a week at the time and place designated by the Rector. Although morning check does not require the student to attend any service in the hall chapel, such as Mass or morning prayer, it is an encouragement for him to do so.



As you may have guessed, the table where we had to sign in for morning check was conveniently located just outside the chapel door. However, I don't remember ever seeing anyone go into the chapel after signing in.

The sign-in time was always during the half hour before morning mass, which was at 7:30 am. But here is something I'll bet that you couldn't have guessed: The men who were required to staff the sign-in table were students who had athletic scholarships but whose season was not currently in play. This was true even for the football players. Of course, during the four years that I attended Notre Dame, we never had even one winning football season! Life at a small, all-boys' Catholic school in the Midwest during the 1960s wasn't anything that I would wish on someone today.

Another bizarre rule was that in Freshman dorms the electricity in the entire building was turned off at 11:00 pm. We all had to be in bed by then, and a priest went room-to-room to check on us. For the upper three classes, the lights off time was midnight. During exam time, many of us would steal candles from the Grotto, cover our windows with



***John Tobia in our senior year's dorm room.
Top bunk and desk were mine.***

towels, and study by candlelight. As hard as it may be to believe, one of my classmates was actually suspended for a semester for the offense of studying by candle after lights out.

In the spring of 1961, there was a big Easter celebration held on the Freshman Quad, which was close to Vetville, where all of the married students and their families lived in rather poor housing, Quonset huts if I remember correctly. My friend Cory Booker dressed up in a big Easter Bunny costume and was walking around giving candy eggs to the little children.

I don't know how it all began, but some of the older children began throwing the candy eggs back at Cory, who soon became the most enraged Easter Bunny that you've ever seen. Before long he was bending over and picking up anything that he could get his big bunny paws on and throw it back at the kids. After the parents

became involved, and a fire hose was unleashed, it became a full-fledged riot. For some strange reason, the crowd began chanting "ALL NIGHT LIGHTS," and the very first student demonstration of the Sixties at the University of Notre Dame had begun.

Before it was over, a thousand or so "Notre Dame Men" had poured across the highway that separated our campus from the girls' school, Saint Mary's. We quickly surrounded the freshman girls' dorm and began yelling for them to throw down their panties. Why anyone thought that would work, I don't know. Granted, this was a far cry from the student anti-war demonstrations of the later 60s, but in 1961 it was at least a small showing to the university administration that the students were beginning to wake up.

During the summer that followed this unruly Easter mob, the president of the university, Father Hesburgh, or Father Ted as we liked to call him, sent a letter to all of our parents warning them that if their son participated in another demonstration of any kind, he would be expelled. As I said, things were different back then. However, I should also add that the following school year we were allowed to keep our lights on all night and study if we wished. Thus the first crack in the ruling elite's authority appeared!

Background Music

Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first person to orbit Earth.

1,400 Cuban exiles landed in the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion.

President Kennedy announced the goal of putting a man on the Moon before the end of the decade.

257

That creepy old skull

When I was about eight years old, I sneaked a peek into my dad's top dresser drawer, the place where he kept his personal stuff. It was then that I first saw THE SKULL!

Granted, this little three-inch-high ceramic image of a human skull isn't all that terrifying. However, back then, for a little boy who

was already freaked out by the fact that he was doing something forbidden, I was already scared. When I looked into my dad's dresser drawer, and I saw that skull for the first time, I freaked out! I slammed the drawer shut and didn't sneak a look for at least another year or more. Don't ask me why, but I felt that little skull would tell my dad if I ever looked into the drawer again.

Eventually, I got up my courage once again, but this time I talked my little brother, who was four and a half years younger than me, to look into the drawer with me. I didn't tell him about the skull. So I very slowly opened the drawer, while my little brother stood on a chair so he could see what I was doing. As soon as the skull appeared, I let out a shout, and my brother jumped and toppled the chair over with a big thud. We barely got things straightened out and left the room before our mother could figure out what we were doing.



The night in 1975, after our dad had recently died, my brother and I were consoling one another when he said, "So, are you going to take that skull out of his dresser drawer? Because I'm sure as hell not going to let that evil thing see me again." And that is how I came to have that creepy old skull on my desk.

258

My mother's stamp box

For all of my childhood years, there was a little metal box on my mother's writing desk, and that was where our family kept our precious stash of postage stamps. I can still remember opening that small box and sorting through the one-, two-, and three-cent stamps to stick on a letter that my mother was ready to mail. I guess that this little metal box, with its wooden interior, was actually designed for stamps because of the pony express rider's image in bas-relief on the cover.



For the past seven years, that little box has been sitting on a table next to my desk, here in the Psychedelic Salon. During all that time, I never thought to look inside to see if any of my mother's stamps were still there. When I was getting ready to take the above

picture of that little box, I looked inside. Guess what? It still contained some stash, not stamps, but *real* stash.

"Stamp" Box Contents:

Three and a half milligrams of 15x extract Malaysian Kratom.

One gram of 25x extract Salvia Divinorum

I won't mention where those two packages came from, because that Website is still going strong but isn't selling Salvia and Kratom any more. So my mother's stamp/stash box is still in good use.

259

Dog tags

I no longer have the dog tags that wore when I was in the Navy. They are now in the safekeeping of a former girlfriend, with whom I'm still friends. However, the other day, when I was taking a picture of those two coffee cups that I had made in Hong Kong for my dad and me, inside my dad's cup, I found his dog tags from World War II.

The first thing that stood out was the fact that they are oval shaped, not rectangular as they are today. Apparently, the U.S. Navy was the only branch of the services that used this shape at the time. The other thing that immediately stood out was the little Saint Christopher medal that was attached. One of the more persistent Catholic superstitions is that these small medals would offer some

kind of magical protection. And, perhaps, in my dad's case, it did since he survived the massive explosion of the *Mount Hood* during the war.

The dog tags themselves are duplicates. That is so, should the person wearing them get shot, that the odds of a bullet going through both tags were slim, and the person's body could still be identified. I never liked that thought. So when our ship was off the coast of Viet Nam during the American War there, I always unhooked the small chain to the second tag and left it with my other stuff in the officers' quarters.



In addition to his name being stamped into the metal, Joseph Finley Hagerty, my dad's serial number, and his branch of service USNR-A, there was also this code: T-2/44-C. Thanks to the wonders of the World Wide Web and DuckDuckGo, I discovered that what this code means is that my dad's most recent tetanus shot was on

February 2, 1944, and that he was a Catholic.



***Little Larry sitting outside
Grandpa Fox's window.***

260

Heights

I've always enjoyed being up high. Of course, my friends might say that I should leave the word "up" out of the previous sentence.

When my grandfather, Dan Fox, was alive he had an upstairs bedroom with a window looking out over our back porch roof. Some of my earliest memories are of the times that Grandpa Fox would open his window and let me play on the roof. After he died, that became my room. In fact, the five years that I had that room for myself was the only time, including my high school years, when I didn't have to share a bedroom with my brother.

At night, I would often go out on that roof, lay back, look at the stars, and dream about what my life would be like. Spoiler Alert: Never in my wildest dreams did I think that I'd be podcasting from the Psychedelic Salon. . . . Still high after all these years.



I was up a little higher on the main mast when I took this picture of my friend mending a sail. Sailors always sit down when they have a chance.

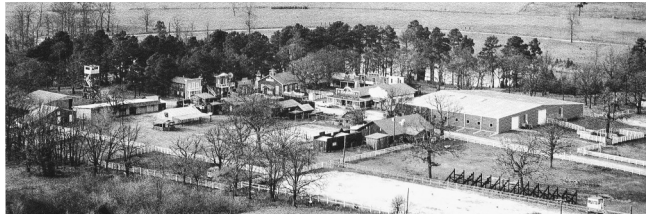
Later, when I got the job on the square-rigged sailing ship, climbing aloft to work on the sails and rigging was a joy for me.

It's hard to describe what it was like to go aloft during periods when the sea would be violently rolling our ship from side-to-side. As much as I enjoyed the excitement at the time, I do admit that I was also scared out of my wits a few times as well.

261

The ranch

During the years when I was living in Dallas, my business partner bought a



'ranch' from one of our mutual friends. I guess that it was about 20 acres and had a fake town built on it. From time-to-time, we held corporate gatherings there. In my novel, *The Genesis Generation*, I use it as the location for part of the story. Here is how I described it in that book:

The team-building week for SiAmerica's mid-level managers was spent at the CEO's fake town. That is really the best title to give to what he called 'my ranch.' It wasn't actually a ranch at all. It was just a twenty-acre tract of rock-strewn hills, on which our fearless leader had hired a gang of unskilled carpenters to build an old western-looking town.

When you first drove up to the long entrance road and passed through the fake old fort wall, you thought you had been transported into an adults-only theme park. From the outside, it really looked great, just like an Old West town. There was a general store, blacksmith shop, a schoolhouse (where we would be spending our days in a daze), and the obligatory saloon. I couldn't wait to get checked into my room and begin exploring this wonderful-looking place, but the room was my first tip-off that things weren't going to be as cool as I thought.

Our rooms were camouflaged behind a two-story, block-long row of fake storefronts. Russ and I shared a room that was behind a sign that read, "Ma's Bakery." My excitement took a steep dive when I discovered my room to be about as comfortable and exciting as a cheap 1950s motel room. Sadly, the room turned out to be more interesting than the rest of the cheesy props in this so-called town.

To be honest, that's probably not an entirely fair description of the ranch. The rooms were closer to a 1960s sense of decor than to the 1950s.

262

Small town newspapers

One of the phrases that I hear people using lately is to begin a story by saying, "Back in the day." When I first heard someone say that they were talking about something that took place back in the 1980s, and I thought they were misusing the phrase because that didn't sound very long ago to me. When my parents would use that phrase, they were talking about the time before they had indoor toilets and electricity when they were children. So the 1980s don't seem to fit the "back in the day" model for me.

And while I don't consider this little story to have taken place back in the day, I guess that it actually did. This was a time before we had television, and in the evenings the entire family would gather around our radio and listen to shows like "The Great Gildersleeve" and "Fibber McGee and Molly," mainly comedy programs.

I don't remember ever listening to the news in the evenings, but I'm sure that the adults in the house listened to some of the nationally syndicated news broadcasters at their regularly scheduled half hour. For local news, however, our primary source, other than the gossip that my dad picked up while working at the J.C. Penney store downtown, was the Elgin Daily Courier News. And almost every day there would be a picture in the paper showing one of their delivery



—Courier-News Photo
SHARON WILKINSON, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wilkinson, 539 Grace St., in delivering The Courier-News to 254 Villa St. is greeted by Miss Anne Fox and her nephew, Larry Hagerly. Sharon is a pupil at Garfield school.

Little Larry in the news

persons at work. And so it was that my Aunt Anne and I made the paper one day.

Background Music

*Babe Ruth died. Joe Louis becomes world heavyweight boxing champion.
Harry Truman beats Thomas Dewey for president of the U.S.*

263

Ancestors

One of the reasons I'm compiling these *Volumes* of little stories is so that my distant descendants can learn something about what life was like when I was alive. Don't get me wrong, I'm not looking for them to be grateful or anything like that. I just want them to know a few of the things that I saw and experienced while I was alive.

This is the only picture that I have with my dad, his mother, and her mother together. Typically, my dad was the one taking the photos. Mother's Day was always important in our family's life, and seeing the flowers next to my great grandmother, I'm assuming that



this picture was taken on that special day.

I know a little bit about my dad's early life. And I do know about my grandmother's life while I was a boy, but next to nothing of her life before I was born. Of my great grandmother, I know nothing at all, not even her name. I would give a lot today to be able to read the stories of their struggles and triumphs, their loves and tragedies. What did they learn about life that might be of benefit to us today? I hope that you are documenting some of your own stories because

one day you are going to be the ancestor that your family would like to know more about.

264

Siblings

Although my grandchildren (all of whom were born *after* the World Wide Web brought about an explosion in Internet usage) may not be able to imagine what life was like before Instagram and YouTube, I don't remember being bored while I was a young boy.



Mike in his Hopalong Cassidy phase, and me working on a puzzle.

In addition to our family time each evening listening to one or two radio programs, our time was mainly spent reading. Even as youngsters, my brother and I enjoyed reading. It wasn't unusual for me to go through a "Hardy Boys" mystery every week. Fortunately, my Aunt Anne was always available to walk us to the library on Saturday to select our reading material for the coming week.

My brother was four and a half years younger than me, but until I began high school, we spent a lot of time together. Part of the reason, of course, was because there were no other children our ages nearby. But we also got along well and never fought as far as I can remember. I was so much older, relatively speaking, that he never felt that he could challenge me about using toys and other things that young children often argue about. I like to think, however, that his over-achievements later in life were spurred on by a deep-seated desire to be 'better' than me in the way that siblings often think of their families as a competition of some kind.

Miguel, who we called Mike back then, became an Eagle Scout. I never made it past First Class. Mike was the president of our state's

young science organization and won a trip to London to represent the youth of Illinois while he was still in high school. After graduating from the University of Notre Dame, he moved to Spain, where he received his Master and Doctorate degrees. At the time of his death in 2010, Miguel held a tenured professorship at the University of Granada. Although he wrote several books, I've never been able to read one because they are all written in Spanish.

I still think of him most often as Mike, my little brother. We didn't see much of one another after we grew up, but on those occasions when I managed to get to Spain for a visit, we had great times, laughing, eating, drinking red wine, and smoking some great hash that he and Marita had smuggled into Spain from Morocco. Just because we lived on different continents and seldom were in contact, it doesn't mean that we weren't close, at least in the way that brothers can be. I still think of him every day and miss him.

Background Music

Julius Rosenberg and his wife Ethel are convicted and sentenced to death for conspiracy to commit espionage for the Soviet Union.

265

Mondo 2000 Issue #10

When did you first learn about DMT? When did you first learn about Terence McKenna? For me, the answer to those two questions is the same. It was in 1993 when the 10th issue of *Mondo 2000* hit the streets. At the time, the San Francisco Weekly magazine predicted that this would be the last issue of Mondo since its editor-in-chief was leaving. Ken Goffman, who we all know better as R U Sirius, was the original editor and co-creator of this keystone of 90s culture. Along with publisher Queen Mu and an extended cast of questionable artists, musicians, and writers they produced a magazine that had no regular publication date yet sold out soon after hitting the newsstands.



Whenever an issue of *Mondo* arrived in my mailbox, everything else in my life came to a stop for a few days as I read it from cover to cover. At the time, I was living in Florida and was about as far away from the scene on the West Coast as you can imagine. So *Mondo* was my hook into a culture that I first encountered in Dallas at the Starck Club during my drug dealing days (or should I say daZe).

As you can see from the cover of issue ten, the first story that is promoted says "DMT Elves." That is the very first place that I had ever encountered a discussion of this drug called DMT. Little did I realize at the time that this substance would eventually become an essential stop on the road to expanding my sense of awareness.

Just to give you an idea of how far ahead of mainstream culture *Mondo* was, the opening page of issue ten carried an advertisement which began with the words, "From Virtual Reality to virtually anything." While the concept of virtual reality is taken for granted today, most of us back then didn't truly understand what that phrase meant. But it was when I reached page 48 of Issue #10 that my life took another hard left turn. The article that began on that page is titled, "Terence McKenna Meets Xandor Korzybski: Terence and the Coming Eschaton."

So it was in a magazine, back in 1993, that I first became aware of some people (McKenna, R U Sirius, and Xandor, all of whom I later got to know) and some drugs that, over time, helped me to become the person I am today. I'm not saying that I'm anywhere close to being the man whose image in my mind I am still trying to become, but I'm a lot closer than I was when *Mondo Number 10*

first arrived. And for what it's worth, over the next three years *Mondo* managed to publish another seven issues with Sirius, Mu, and Xandor still contributing in various ways. I still have all 17 issues in a box in my garage. One day, when I get old, I plan on re-reading them.

Background Music

The Martin Luther King national holiday is established. Bill Clinton becomes the 42nd president. Václav Havel becomes the first president of an independent Czech Republic.

266

Travel memories

As I was sorting through some boxes of old papers. I came across a menu I kept from a trip that I took in 1966, before I was in the Navy or married. At the time, I was a footloose and fancy-free bachelor who was scheduled to enter officer's candidate school in March, and the thought that was always at the back of my mind was that there was the possibility I would wind up in Viet Nam and get killed. So I decided to have one last hurrah before then and spent a couple of months experiencing a small taste of Europe.

Four years earlier I'd spent a few weeks traveling in Mexico, and I had already had a Pacific sailing experience, which included several months living in Hawaii and working as a stuntman in the movies. But the trip to Europe was the big prize. While many of my college classmates, thanks to their wealthy parents, were able to spend a year in Europe after graduation, I had almost given up on the idea. However, through a fortunate chain of events (which I may write about later but which don't impact this tale) made it possible for me to travel to Vienna, Salzburg, and Innsbruck in Austria, Frankfurt in Germany, and England from London to Dartmoor.

It was in London that my trip began, and I wrote a brief story about that in *Volume 1*. It is story number 154, and that happens to be the only story in that book for which I forgot to add a title. I'm shocked that my editors and I all missed it. You may recall me

mentioning a restaurant called the Borshtch 'n' Tears that my friend and I took two dates to. I still have a few clear memories of sitting there at a large table with over a dozen people, all of whom were exceedingly drunk, including myself I should add.



1966 London Menu

I remember the broken glass on the floor where we smashed our vodka glasses after each round, and I even remember the faces of two of the Irish newspapermen. But I have no recollection at all of what our dates looked like. However, as I recall, the prices for a good meal in London in 1966 were significantly higher than anything I'd experienced before in the States. The Chicken Kiev at £12/6 converted to 2018 dollars is even pricey yet today. While the beet soup was expensive for me at the time, it nonetheless was worth it because I still have a clear memory of my first taste of borscht.

Now my point in this little story is that if you were going through your grandfather's papers after he died, and if you came across this flimsy little piece of a paper menu, my guess is that you would toss it out, as you should. Because for anyone other than your grandfather, it would have no memories attached to it. But for me, when I first saw this little piece of paper a few hours ago, it launched me deep into the beautiful reverie of a magical trip that I took once

upon a time, back when I was a younger man, fifty-two years younger to be precise. So I'm happy that I kept this little scrap of paper all this time, and now that I've had my say about it I'm ready to throw the damn thing away.

Background Music

The United States conducts a nuclear test in Nevada. France performs a nuclear test in Algeria. The USSR's Luna 9 makes the first soft landing on the moon.

267

The War Years

That's what my mother called the days of World War II, although she preferred to not think about that time if she could avoid doing so.

The photo on the right was taken by my dad a few days before he left for Navy boot camp. He was ordered to report on the 18th of December 1943, and so he missed this Christmas season during which, at 17 months old, I was just beginning to experience the magic that season brought to us back then. It wasn't until the Christmas of 1946 that my dad was home for the holidays again.



December 1943 - Ruth and Larry

Although I have no memory of the scene above, in later years, I do remember that my stockings were more substantial, but they only had apples and oranges in them. Little did I realize how much the rest of my family cherished that fresh fruit after not seeing it during the war years.



After the war, my dad would read comic books to me.

The room shown is the sitting room for the master suite in the Villa Street house that I wrote so much about in *Volume 1*. For the first few years after my dad returned from the war, he and my mother's bed was also in that room. There was a door next to their bed that was always kept closed and which led into the master bedroom that my grandparents shared while my grandmother Fox was still alive. My brother's and my bedroom was also connected to the sitting/bedroom, and there was a bathroom next to our room. My aunt Anne lived upstairs, as did three "roomers," who were students at the Elgin Watch College.

At the end of January 1947, my little brother was born. One of the roomers moved out at the same time, and so my grandfather took the small room upstairs that I later would have as my own, and my parents moved into the master bedroom. Thus, my parents, brother, and I lived in the three-room master suite on the main floor of the Villa Street House. It was a really great place to grow up. Just seeing that picture of our fireplace and those old chairs brings back a flood of great memories.

Background Music

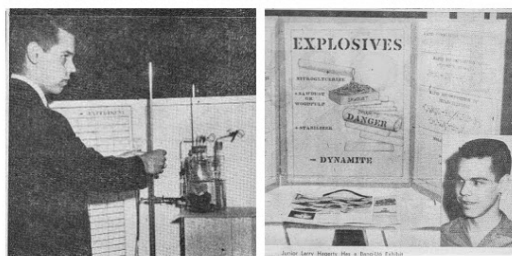
Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin agree to Operation Overlord, the D-day invasion of Europe. Dwight Eisenhower is appointed Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in Europe.

268

Science projects

During each of my four years of high school, I participated in our state's science fairs. While I don't have a picture of my freshman year project, for which I built an anemometer and other weather measuring equipment, I did manage to get a photo of the big globe that I created for the centerpiece of our school's event, and I attached it to story 115 in *Volume 1*. Also, in that volume, in story 153, I

wrote about my Tesla coil experiments, and I have to admit that was the best science fair project that I ever managed to produce.



Senior Year: Tesla coil

Sophomore Year: Gibberellic Acid

Junior Year: Explosives

My last three years of high school took place in Rochelle, Illinois, where my gibberellic acid project was written up in the local paper. Basically, by germinating seeds in a solution of this little chemical, I was able to improve the growth rates in various plants. At the time, I thought that I was breaking new ground in biology. Alas, that was not the case. Had the World Wide Web been around back then I could have learned that

biologists had been working with gibberellic acid since the 1920s. I was such a naive kid, and in many ways, I still am.

In my junior year, I was studying chemistry, and like most young boys, my favorite thing about chemistry was that it could be used to blow things up. At the time, I was also building little rockets that I would take out to a nearby rock quarry for launches. That was also where I tested the explosives that I made for my science project that year. When I was doing the initial research for my project, I wrote to DuPont Chemical Company and asked for information about the explosives they were manufacturing at the time. They not only sent me detailed information about them, they even sent a small sample of one of their more stable concoctions! Times were surely different back then.

Background Music

Elvis Presley ends his two-year hitch in the Army. President Eisenhower forms the anti-Castro-exile army under the CIA. The first patent for lasers is issued. "Lady Chatterley's Lover" is ruled to be not obscene. Motown Records is incorporated. John Kennedy wins the West Virginia primary proving that a Catholic actually does have a chance at becoming president.

269

Early memories

For all but three of the summers of my childhood, our family vacations consisted of spending the week that my dad got off from his job at the J.C. Penny store, "down on Ed's farm." We always said 'down' because we lived in the northern part of the state, close to Chicago, and Ed's farm was downstate in Champaign County.

My Uncle Ed was the oldest of my Grandpa Fox's children.



***That little guy standing next to my dad
is an early version of Lorenzo***

When my mother was about to begin high school, grandpa sold the farm to the Clines, who had become the largest landowners around, seeing as how they were able to purchase the smaller farms of their neighbors as the owners aged and their children moved to cities. Uncle Ed

then leased the farm back and continued to work it until he was in his 90s. To me, it was always Ed's Farm.

During my first few visits to the farm, they still didn't have indoor plumbing. I have clear memories of carrying a water pitcher to the pump just outside the back door and filling it up to put on the dinner table. By the way, back then, dinner was the meal that followed breakfast, and the last meal of the day was called supper.

The memory that I don't relish is of going to the toilet. It was bad enough to have to sit in that dank and stinky old shed during the day, but at night, in the dark, it was a horror. Which brings me to a horrible memory, one that remains clear yet today.

Several of my cousins and I were laying on the floor upstairs and peeking down on the adults who were in the dining room. We could do this because the only heat in the house was from an oil burning stove in the dining room. There were vents in the floor upstairs that could be opened to let the heat rise into the bedrooms. Of course, we opened the vents in the summer to listen in on our parents as they played cards at the dining room table.

That day had been a happy one for me because it was the first time that I got to work alongside my dad. You see, Uncle Ed had bought a septic tank, and we had spent that day digging a hole to put it in. Back then, all of the digging was done by muscle-power, and my dad, uncle, and cousin Eddy provided the bulk of it. However, I, too, provided all of the muscle-power that a four-year-old could offer. The picture of my dad and me on the wagon that we used to haul the dirt away is one of my most treasured images. Now that I think about it, I'm the only one in that picture who is still alive. What a lucky guy I am.

Now back to the bad memory of that day. It was a cloudy, moonless night, filled with the type of darkness that scares me yet today just to think about it. My girl cousins and I were upstairs with our heads together around the vent looking down on the card game, and I had an urgent need to take a piss. But it was dark. The septic tank wouldn't be ready for another week, and there was no way I was going outside alone on such a dark night. So I let it go and soaked my pants. When it was time to go to bed, I had to wiggle around on the floor a bit to make sure there wasn't still a puddle on the wooden floor. I don't remember how, or if, I covered up the wet smell in my pants the next morning. But I clearly remember the warm feeling of embarrassment that night as I sacrificed my pride on the altar of my fear of the dark, a fear that remains with me yet today.

Background Music

Doctor *Benjamin Spock's "Common Sense Book of Baby & Child Care"* is published. Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis perform their first show together.

270

Sleeping arrangements

For most of my early life and all through my high school years, I shared a bedroom with my younger brother. Until I was about 11 years old, we also shared a bed. As you can see, my brother was a somewhat restless sleeper.

In the top left photo you can see a bit of the window that would be open on summer nights, letting cool breezes, the desolate sounds of train whistles, and the entrancing scent of lilacs outside our window, waft over us as we drifted off to sleep.



271

A stoner selfie



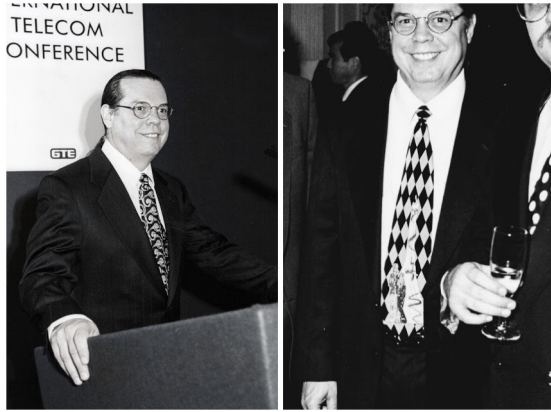
Although selfies are all the rage today, a few years ago, after a grower friend of mine stopped by with a little gift, I couldn't resist taking a picture of what I consider to be an appropriately sized bag of grass.

Even if pot is legal in your state, it would still be wise to support your neighborhood grower.

272

Internet Evangelist

Although my title was more corporate-sounding than Internet Evangelist, that is precisely what I was paid to do. The DotCom boom was well underway, and the telephone company I was working for had just purchased Bolt Beranek and Newman, the company that had developed the first



***Lorenzo speaking at a conference in
London - circa 1998***

router and thus made the first connections for what today is called the Internet. With that purchase came ownership of a significant portion of the backbone of the Net in the U.S.

As one of the organizers of our company's first Internet & Java Development Group, one of my main tasks was to travel to tech conferences in the States and Europe and speak about the coming wonders of this new technology. Upper management in the Fortune 100 companies thought I was crazy, but those on my level understood the power of what was coming and bought into our plans for the future of the Net.

All that time, however, I was also smoking dope and ingesting magic mushrooms on the weekends. So my loyalty to the corporate world was only as strong as my next paycheck. Like a lot of people in the tech world today, I did whatever little things I could to thumb my nose at the system while still taking their money. Check out my ties in the above photos. My "lecture tie" was standard corporate attire, but my "cocktail tie" was a Jerry Garcia tie, complete with a painting by Jerry himself. BTW, I've lost over 30 pounds since that

picture was taken. Obviously, I took full advantage of my expense account back then and wined and dined like a king, or maybe an earl, but certainly better than my salary alone permitted. And that is one of the reasons your phone bill is so high each month, overfed executives.

273

Galoshes

I wonder if children still wear galoshes. I suspect my grandchildren don't even know what that word means. Each winter we would get a new pair because our feet kept growing. Yet, at the beginning of every snow season, it was the same story: "Just try to get them on with your new shoes. Maybe we can stretch them one more year." Of course, once we had forced our new shoes into the old galoshes (which we always called boots, BTW), it quickly became apparent that they weren't coming back out while still on our feet. And so we would pull our feet out of the boots and then begin the lengthy process of easing our shoes out of them. We did the same thing every year, or at least that's the way I remember it. Maybe that only happened one time. In any event, the experience is still with me.



274

An acid trip at Disneyworld

Back in the late 1980s, I was living on the West Coast of Florida. However, I was working a contract job in Daytona, on the opposite coast. It was an easy drive between work and home on the I-4, and I commuted to work on Monday returning home on Friday. About halfway in between was Disneyworld.

Early one Friday evening in February, as I was leaving Daytona and heading home, I thought that it would be a good idea to drop some acid. The drive home was only a little over an hour, and so I figured that it would just be coming on as I exited the freeway near my house. In short, I made a bad decision . . . Kind of.

By the time I approached the exit for Disneyworld, it was apparent that I needed to get off the road and park for a few hours because the acid was beginning to affect me more dramatically than I had anticipated. The truth is, I had no idea how much acid I took. It was in liquid form, and I had a few drops, that's all I remembered as I pulled into the parking lot at Disneyworld. We had just moved to Florida, and our youngest son was still a fan of the Disney fakery, and so we had annual passes. I parked, showed my pass at the gate, and soon I was in a magical land, full of lights and cartoon sounds that were being amplified by the LSD coursing through my system.



Two main things stand out for me from my trippy trip to the land of Disney. Perhaps the best and most memorable part of the evening for me was on my favorite ride, The Pirates of the Caribbean. I always enjoyed that ride, and on this February night there wasn't much of a crowd. So I when the ride ended, I was able to get right back into the next car/boat. There's no way for me to know exactly how many times in a row that I took that ride, but for sure, it was more than five. Eventually, the people operating it eased me back out onto the midway.

If you've ever been to a Disney park, you know that when they are about to close they have a big parade that ends near the front gate on Main Street. I got a good seat for it by sitting on the curb a block or so from the gate. The parade was spectacular. If you've never seen one of the Disney light parades while you are tripping on acid, you have absolutely no idea of what a thrilling experience you have missed.

After the parade ended, I found myself still sitting on the curb when a kindly attendant told me that the park was closing. He then encouraged me to get up and leave. Although I am sure that he realized I was tripping on something, he was very calm and helped

me leave without being noticed by the security people who seemed to come out of the shadows at the park's closing time. So I moved my car out of their lot, parked a few blocks away, and there I slept for a couple of hours before heading home. That was the last time I was ever at a Disney park because it was clear to me that I would never have a better experience in one of their parks than that one.

275

Doolittle's Raiders

Four months before I was born one of the most legendary air raids in history took place. On April 18, 1942, from the deck of the aircraft carrier *USS Hornet*, 16 Army B-25s took off and proceeded to bomb Tokyo. Only a few months had passed since the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor, and so this was a huge psychological boost for the American public. At the time, it was considered impossible for a U.S. Air Force plane the size of a B-25 to take off from an aircraft carrier. In fact, since then that feat has never been surpassed, and it was a joint Army-Navy mission as well.

The co-pilot of the ninth plane to take off was Jim Parker, and in the 1970s, when I was practicing law in Houston, Jim became one of my clients. On several occasions, he told me some of the harrowing stories about training for that incredible takeoff at sea in a huge Army Air Force plane. He also talked about what



***Jim Parker (far right) with my son Chris
in front of a B-25***

he and the other men involved in the mission thought when they first learned that after completing their bombing runs over Tokyo they were going to have to ditch their planes, bail out over China, and then somehow make their way back home.

Not all of them made it back. Of the sixteen five-man crews, however, fourteen of them made it back to the American forces, except for one man who died during the action. The stories of their crash landings and escapes from enemy forces are all deserving of feature films of their own. Jim Parker's story was no exception, and he was kind enough to take my son Chris and myself to the Confederate Air Show and tell his stories there.

While at the show, Jim took Chris up into the cockpit of a B-25 and with Chris in the pilot's seat, Jim sat once again in the co-pilot's seat and explained what he had to do while they were taking off from the *Hornet*. I can't describe how much gratitude I felt toward Jim Parker for spending so much time passing along a little first-hand history to my son. It was a perfect father/son moment for Chris and me, one which I will always treasure. And in some strange way, it made me feel as if Jim Parker and I are genuinely brothers-in-arms.

276

Raw Oysters

The first time I ate a raw oyster was during spring break while I was in my final year at Notre Dame. Dave Herlihy, Dan Brosnan, Sewell Oertling and I drove from Indiana to LaPorte, Texas and stayed for a few days with my mentor, Ray Bell, and his wife, Edie.

One of the things that I remember best about our stay with the Bell's is the night that we had a little party on the beach in front of their house, which sat on a high bluff at the north end of Galveston Bay. A few doors down from the Bell's lived "Diamond" Glenn McCarthy, the legendary wildcatter. You may remember him from the movie *Giant*, in which he was portrayed by James Dean. Next to

McCarthy's place was the legendary Sterling Mansion, a full-sized replica of the White House. It was an interesting neighborhood.



***Dan Brosnan, Dave Herlihy,
Katy Russell (background),
Suzie Bell, Lorenzo,
Edie Bell, circa 1964***

It was at our little party on the beach that I had my first s'more. The Bell girls were girl scouts at the time, and s'mores are a mainstay at every girl scout cookout, at least from what I've been told. In case you've never had one, a s'more consists of two graham crackers used as a sandwich to hold a thin piece of a Hershey's chocolate bar (no nuts) topped with a marshmallow that had been roasted on a stick held over an open fire. You haven't lived until you've eaten a s'more around a

campfire at night on a cold beach.

After a few days in LaPorte, we got up early and drove to New Orleans, where we were to be staying with Sewall's parents. As we were saying goodbye and walking out to our car, Ray was lecturing us on the need to drive safely. Then, once we were in the car, he handed us a six pack of beer to keep us from getting dry on the trip. Ray wasn't necessarily the best person to take safety advice from.

Once we reached New Orleans, it began, for me, a true Odyssey. New Orleans, at least back in 1964, was a fantastic town. I'm sure that in many ways it still is. However, back in '64, over 40 years before Hurricane Katrina changed the shape of the city forever, it was like no other place on Earth. Sewall's family wasn't wealthy, but compared to my family, they were what my mother would call well-to-do. His family had long-standing ties to the Jax Brewing Company, which at the time, with it's Jax Beer line, was the 10th largest brewer in the country, and the largest in the South.

The thing that I remember the clearest from our visit to Sewell's home is his grandmother. Every morning she got up early and supervised the preparation of our breakfast, which always included the offer of a Jax beer if we wanted. None of us ever took her up on her offer out of consideration to Sewell, but it was surely tempting. And to be honest, maybe that didn't actually happen. But that's the way that Dave Herlihy and I told the story for many years after ... like now.



Lorenzo and Sewell recovering from a night out with Ray Bell

The second night that we were in New Orleans, Sewell's parents took us out to dinner at one of the famous restaurants in town. For appetizers, his dad ordered raw oysters for all of us. Now if you've ever seen a raw oyster you know that they are among the most unappetizing foods ever, just a big gray mass of shimmering sliminess resting on half of a dirty-looking shell. And when I was told that they were still alive, I almost ran out of the place. Nonetheless, I ate my first one, then the second, then another, and another, and so it went until I had eaten my first dozen raw oysters. I was hooked.

After leaving active duty with the Navy in 1969, my wife and I and our children moved from San Diego to Houston, where I was to return to law school. One of the first things that we did upon our return was to go to the San Jacinto Inn, a historic seafood restaurant on the Houston Ship Channel. They served all you can eat platters of raw oysters. I'm not sure exactly how many we consumed, but it was many dozens. Even the jolly old waiter who had been working at the Inn for decades was impressed with the number of raw oysters my wife and I ate.

When I was practicing law in Houston, I would often drive down to the docks in Kemah and buy a gunny sack full of raw oysters. Then, along with a few friends, we would sit in the back yard drinking beer, shucking and eating oysters, and telling tall tales. As time progressed, however, it was becoming ever more apparent that raw oysters were going to pose some serious health risks for people who weren't sure of the source of these tasty little shellfish. So I quit eating them altogether, which wasn't easy for me.

It was in September of 2000, on a tiny island a couple of ferry rides past Vancouver Island in Canada, that I had my last raw oyster. I was attending a private conference of healthcare professionals, writers, and psychedelic wanderers like myself. It was a fantastic week, and I'll eventually get around to telling more stories from this event, but the one that remains as my most vivid moment of 2000 was at the farewell picnic held near the water's edge one perfect fall evening.

The sun was still a couple of hours from setting, and so the late afternoon light had just turned into that perfect shade that arrives in late September. There were tables and cooking equipment near the little beach, and it was arranged around a big fire pit where various and sundry delicacies were being prepared and handed out to us guests.

As I was walking past the station where the raw oysters were being served, I was stopped by a man who had already captivated my attention that week on several other occasions.



The place where I ate my last raw oyster

It was Julian Huxley, the nephew of Aldous. During the week, he had been quite generous and fascinating in sharing various anecdotes about his famous uncle with me. When he stopped me that evening, he said, in that beautiful lilting British accent of his, "I say, you really should try these oysters. They are the most magnificent oysters I've ever encountered. And look, just out there is where they were harvested only an hour ago. You simply **MUST** try one."

My first reply was to say that I had quit eating oysters because I was concerned about the health risks they carried. But Huxley would have none of it, and simply handed me a raw oyster on a half shell and said, "Eat up!" So I did. In fact, I ate at least a dozen more of them before we were called in for the evening meal.

I have been offered raw oysters on many occasions since then, but I have managed to resist them all, not because of health concerns, although those haven't changed. The reason that I will never eat another raw oyster is that whenever someone offers me one I can tell them that the last raw oyster I ate was given to me by Julian Huxley, and I don't want to sully that memory.

277

Shrimping

Some of my most treasured memories from the days when I lived in and around Houston, Texas, are centered on my mentor, Ray Bell, and his first-class shrimp boat, the *Edie Bell*. And when I say first class, I mean precisely that. The *Edie Bell*, which was named after Ray's wife, was built by Johnny Sutterfield, who was the last of the great wooden boat builders on Galveston Bay. The *Edie Bell's* cabin was paneled with mahogany and trimmed in brass as if she was a yacht.



Ray owned a fleet of Mississippi River tug boats that moved barges filled with grain in the Midwest down to the port of New Orleans. At the time, he and Edie did all of the scheduling and coordinating for his 28 tugs, mainly through telephones and ship-to-shore radios, which would bring calls from boat captains and frantic customers at all hours of the day and night.

In the shipping business, it was customary for suppliers like Ray to entertain the executives of their most valuable customers with fancy meals. But Ray had a different twist on that idea. When his customers would come to town, instead of taking them out to an expensive restaurant after they had conducted the day's business, Ray would buy them a commercial fishing license and take them out shrimping on the *Edie Bell*. When his customers returned home to their land-locked Midwestern towns, Ray would send along an ice chest filled with shrimp they caught, and that was left over from the previous night's shrimp and crab boil. His customers never stopped showing off their fishing licenses and talking about the day they spent out on Galveston Bay, working as deckhands on a commercial shrimp boat.

One day in October of 1973, after I had completed my first year practicing law, my parents came to Texas for a visit, and Ray Bell took us all out shrimping one day. Like Ray's essential customers, my dad was able to return to the frozen wastes of Northern Illinois and brag about the day he worked as a



***My mother watching my son Chris,
my dad, and me sorting shrimp***

commercial shrimper. Of course, a day on the *Edie Bell* was far removed from what work was like for deckhands who depended on a good catch to provide their day's wages.

During the first year after I left my law practice, I tried several other ways to earn a living. One of them was to work as a deckhand on Johnny Sutterfield's new shrimp boat *Little Rabbit*. A year earlier, I had tried to buy that beautiful craft, but fortunately, my banker at the time was wise enough to turn me down for the loan. The fact that I was considering a career as a commercial fisherman rather than continuing in the practice of law should give you an idea of how distasteful I found the practice of law to be.

278

Law school

After graduating from the University of Notre Dame as an electrical engineer, I entered law school at the University of Houston. Initially, I had hoped to attend law school at Notre Dame, where I was accepted while I was still an undergraduate engineering student. It is evident that my undergraduate grades had no bearing on my admission to the N.D. law school because they were abysmal. I did, however, get an extremely high LSAT test score, and I'm sure that is what got me accepted there. At least, I got a peek in the door, but the tuition at Notre Dame was far more than I could manage, and so I decided to go to law school in the city where I intended to practice, Houston, Texas.

To finance my law school studies, I got a job as an electrical engineer with the ITE Circuit Breaker Company. They were quite flexible with my work schedule as an hourly employee, and so I was also able to maintain a full schedule in school at the same time.



This was an incredibly transformative time for me, as it was the first time in my life that I was entirely on my own. I had a job. I had an apartment. And I even had a few pieces of furniture that friends had given me. What I didn't have was a desk to sit at as I read the law. Fortunately, I had moved some of my possessions from Elgin to Houston in four old wooden crates that I'd scrounged up at our

family's favorite tavern, Vopners. And so it was that I learned the law sitting at a desk made out of four old whiskey crates. It wasn't exactly following the model of a young Abe Lincoln when he was studying law. Nonetheless, I did graduate *cum laude*.

279

A solo burn

Do you remember that old Beatles song titled "When I'm 64"? The chorus goes, "Will you still need me, will you still feed me, when I'm sixty-four?" Well, a couple of weeks after I



My 2006 Burning Man home

celebrated my 64th birthday, to find out whether I'd still be needed and fed, I headed to the one place in the world where I knew that even strangers are needed and fed. In fact, the stranger you are at Burning Man the more meal offers you'll receive.

If you have ever been to a burn then you know that it is not only hot, dusty, and very expensive, it also takes many weeks to recover from after returning home. And so my wife decided to skip the event that year, and I went alone. Our old car wasn't up to the trip either. So I rented a small sedan, took out the back seat, and packed it full with everything that I would need to survive a week in the desert. And by everything I mean, food, water, transportation, and shelter, which was another good reason to use a rental car.

This was also the fourth year of the Palenque Norte Lectures that my wife and I first launched in a tiny little structure made out of cardboard back in 2003. By the 2006 burn, the Palenque Norte Lectures were hosted at Entheon Villiage, which also hosted the MAPS Zendo Project in its first year of operation at a burn. Thanks to some great volunteers from the state of Washington, the most massive tent yet erected on the playa was decorated and opened fur us to use to host over 30 talks and workshops.

I coordinated and MC'd all of the talks, assisted by Darin Leong, who handled all of the audio work. For a variety of reasons, I decided not to camp at Entheon Village, where the talks were being held, and instead camped with a large, eclectic, extended family that was composed mainly of



The 2006 Palenque Norte Lectures

strangers. It was in a camp called Hushville, which was far on the other side of Black Rock City from our lecture tent.



***Lorenzo at the site of
"the man,"
after it burned
September 3, 2006***

There was a rule in Hushville that there was to be no amplified music in the camp, particularly at night. It was supposed to be a relatively quiet place to camp and get a little sleep. Of course, this was Burning Man, and things don't always work out as you expect them to at a burn. In our case, the label 'Hushville' on the map of the event was what attracted so many art cars to drive around our block all night, blasting music and firing flame throwers. It actually was one of the noisiest places on the playa that year.

I've written about that year's lecture series in other places, and I probably will mention it again. But for me, the most crucial part of my 2006 Burning Man experience was to learn that even though I was approaching that dreaded place called old age, I still had it in me to survive a burn on my own. ... One more thing, I should add that for my first and only time at Burning Man, that year I didn't ingest any drugs or even drink any booze. Yet, it felt like the highest I've ever been while on the playa.

280

Muir Woods

In the early winter of 1966, I was an officer serving in the U.S. Navy, and my ship was going through an overhaul at Hunter's Point near San Francisco. Since no one could live on our ship while she was in dry dock, we had to find our own places to live in the Bay Area. I was a junior officer, and my pay wasn't very much. So my wife, our son Chris, and I had to rent an apartment in Daley City, which was over an hour commute to the shipyard.

I frequently had to be on duty over the weekend, while the more senior officers got it off. However, that actually worked out quite well on the Monday morning when we drove north for a visit to the Muir Woods National Park because we were about the only people there. If you have ever had the pleasure of walking through a stand of enormous redwood trees, on a day when you are among the only people around, you know what a peaceful and uplifting experience it can be. Now imagine what a perfect moment this was for our little family, as we had a day of peace and rest, trying to not think about the fact that before long I would be on a ship that was on its way to war.



***My wife, Mary, and
our son Chris
Muir Woods late 1966***

281

My first protest demonstration

It was on a Sunday in the spring of 1961, near the end of my second semester at Notre Dame. At the end of the coming week, we would all be going home for what our Easter Break. I was living in Farley Hall, which was on what was then called the Freshman Quad, where all of the dorms for first-year students were situated.



***Notre Dame Freshman Quad in 1961.
Farley Hall in the left foreground.***

In the large grassy expanse between the dormitories, some group had organized an Easter egg roll for the children of the married students who lived just behind the Freshman Quad in Quonset hut-like buildings. It was called Vetville. If I remember correctly, it was my

friend Cory Booker who was dressed in a bunny costume and was handing out candy to the little children. Then a couple of the older children began throwing hard boiled eggs at Cory, which he didn't take very kindly too. Soon Cory and a bunch of teenagers were in an epic egg-throwing fight. What could his friends do but come to his rescue. In short order, the campus cops showed up. But then some guys dragged the fire hoses out from the dorms and began spraying the crowd, cops and all.

As far as our political sensibilities were concerned back then, things were relatively quiet. Jack Kennedy was in only the third month of his presidency, and the Beatles were just playing their first gig at the Cavern Club in Germany ... back before Ringo joined them. On campus, however, there was one raging issue: All Night Lights! That's right, the biggest complaint of the student body at the University of Notre Dame in the spring of 1961 was the fact that at 10:30 every night the electricity in the dormitories was turned off. Priests then went around to every room to be sure that we were in bed and not studying by candlelight. Don't laugh. One of my classmates was suspended for a semester when he was caught using a candle that he stole from the grotto.

Amid the egg throwing, hose spraying, and cops blowing their whistles, someone shouted ALL NIGHT LIGHTS! And the demonstration had begun. For the rest of the afternoon, large groups of students roamed the campus making their demands known about the electricity situation late at night. Before it was over a bunch of us even swarmed across the highway to Saint Mary's, the nearby women's college, demanding that these prim and pampered young ladies throw their panties to us. That's right. My first experience at participating in a large-scale public demonstration was a pantie raid. Later on, I found it to have been excellent preparation for my participation in anti-war protests. ... But that's another story.

Background Music

President Kennedy establishes the Peace Corps. After a 4 1/2 year trial, Nelson Mandela is acquitted of treason. Bob Dylan made his first appearance in New York City.

282

Maid service in college

I have a hunch that, when I tell you that our room and board costs while attending the University of Notre Dame from 1960 - 1964 included maid service, you are going to groan. What pampered little elitists we were you will say. Upon reflection, I must admit that you are correct.

While many of my classmates simply expected maid service, since they also had maids at home, I was one of the poor students and had never experienced such a thing in my life. As I recall, we were told that the women who came in each weekday morning, made our beds, changed the sheets every Monday, emptied the trash, and cleaned our rooms were refugees from the somewhat recent Hungarian Revolution. I remember one year our maid's name was Nora. Before the revolution, Nora had taught literature at a Hungarian university, and now she was reduced to cleaning the rooms of young, pampered boys. Remembering that Nora Barnacle was James Joyce's muse, her name always stuck with me.

I don't think that maid service is still provided to undergraduates at Notre Dame, and I suspect the reason why they aren't as needed today is that when I was a student there, it was an all-boys' school. Now that the student body is almost 50/50 women and men, the boys may have a little more incentive to tidy up their living spaces. It would definitely make me a little neater if I thought some young woman might see me as too messy to consider as a boyfriend.

Another interesting thing about student life at Notre Dame in the 1960s was that for the evening



***Lorenzo saying
a final goodbye
to his college-
room's desk***

meals we were required to wear a coat and tie. On its face, that sounds like an excellent way to force a little civilized behavior into 5,000 horny young men, but it didn't work that way.

By the time I arrived on campus, it was traditional to wear the *same* coat every night for all four years ... and without having them cleaned during that time either. Compared to students today, we seem silly to even me. When I was young, I had many good laughs at the antics of college students in the 1920s. I hope that the goofiness of my college cohort can provide the same chuckles in today's students. However, they should also remember that their grandchildren are going to think that what they are now doing is as stupid as what my classmates and I once did.

283

Blowing the insides out of an egg

Every spring, one of the projects that my Aunt Anne would undertake with her grammar school students is to decorate the classroom with painted, but empty, egg shells. And so it was that my little brother and I were pressed into service to blow the raw contents of the eggs out through tiny holes in the shell. While this may sound like a fun and simple task, the truth was that after the first couple of eggs had been emptied of their contents, it seemed more like an actual job.

In our kitchen (shown in the photo) there was a window just to the left of the photographer (who was me), and it was through that window in the late spring and summer that the delicate smell of the lilac trees just outside would waft into the kitchen. That scent now brings about in me a most melancholy reminiscence of my long-ago childhood. The cabinet just behind my Aunt Anne in the photo was where we kept the spices that Anne and I



would mix in unusual combinations on Saturday afternoons, as we competed to create the world's best salad dressing. Hers was always better than mine, but I'm still working on my recipe. Eventually, I'll get it just the way I think it should be.

Background Music

Francis Crick and James Watson's discovery of the double helix structure of DNA is published in "Nature" magazine. Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay are first to reach the summit of Mount Everest.

284

Tractor races and tractor pulls



My brother Mike/Miguel at Uncle Ed's farm, circa 1953

This probably sounds boring to young people today, but in small farming communities throughout the Midwest, tractor pulls were significant events on hot summer nights. Back in the 1950s, before today's professional, multi-engine competitions, tractor pulls were quite simple. Farmers would bring their working, field-tractors to the

fairgrounds, hook them up to big sleds that were weighted down, and then see whose tractor could drag the sled the farthest.



I can remember one hot Saturday night in August, just after the pea harvest had finished, when my friend's uncle, with a bottle of beer in his hand, jumped up on the front wheels of his brother's tractor as it began to rise up with its heavy load. Although he was successful in bringing the front of the tractor back to the ground, and his brother eventually pulled the sled the farthest, his pull was disqualified because of the drunken assistance.

At that time, I was about to begin my final year in high school, and that event at the tractor pull was the talk of the school for our

first week back after summer vacation. As you can tell, there wasn't much in the way of excitement back then ... at least when compared to what teenagers are exposed to now. Nonetheless, I'm glad that I grew up back when life was slow enough for us humans to keep up with.

Background Music

Soviet Premier Khrushchev begins a 13-day visit to the U.S. and is denied entrance to Disneyland.

285

CIC officer in a war zone

I must admit that when I was young, and my dad's Navy buddies got together with him and talked about their experiences during World War II, it caused me to wonder if their lives after the war were so barren of adventure and excitement that the war was all they had left to talk about. Today, with my own war experiences more than fifty years behind me, I finally understand them.

Looking back on my own experiences in a war zone, I now have the same longing to talk about them, but mainly to my brothers-in-arms who can better relate to what happened back then. I guess the thing that still amazes me the most is how unprepared we were for the responsibilities that we had to assume. Sure, there had been classroom training where we learned how to use the essential equipment in the Combat Information Center, CIC. And we had gone through many hours of drills, practicing our newly acquired skills. But once we were on the gun line, and our calculations, if incorrect, could



***CIC off the coast of Viet Nam
circa 1967
plotting our next target***

cause the deaths of our own men, the immensity of what we were doing hit us. Lives were, quite literally, in our hands.

I remember one night when we were supporting a Marine unit up near the DMZ. There were two other destroyers in company with us, and we were all firing at coordinates that were coming in by radio from a forward observer. Every so often he would request an illumination round (we called them star shells), which would light up the jungle with a blinding light as the flaming payload slowly drifted down to the ground.

One night, just after we had fired a star shell, an excited voice came over the radio shouting, "CEASE FIRE! CEASE FIRE!" to one of the other ships with us who had just accidentally fired an explosive projectile into the Marine's location.

As relieved as I was that it wasn't our ship that had made a mistake and fired on our own troops, it fell to me the next morning, as CIC officer, to file a report of the previous night's action with an entry that read, "One KIA - Friendly." I've never forgotten that situation report. That was the moment when the war became very real for me. Until then, when I reported the number of people who were confirmed dead from our shelling, it didn't hit home that these were also human beings who had loving families, hopes, and dreams, but until then they had just been numbers on my reports. Now, this number became a human being, and I never again thought about the American War in Viet Nam in the same way.

On the Viet Nam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. there are over 58,000 names of Americans who lost their lives in that conflict. We should also have the decency to build another monument to the more than 2,000,000 Vietnamese civilians who were killed in that war as well. I wonder how many more innocent people have lost their lives to U.S. forces in the years since we pulled out of Viet Nam?

Background Music:

Che Guevara murdered by the CIA. Nguyen Van Thieu was sworn in as

the first president of South Viet Nam.

286

The sweet scent of sycamore



***Mike (with paddle), my mother,
and me in the water
with sycamore trees nearby.***

There are two aromas that occasionally flood me with warm memories. One of those scents is that of lilac blooms, which I've written about before. The other time that a scent can send my emotions into play is whenever I smell sycamore trees.

My love affair with the scent of sycamore began when I was around ten years old. It was on our first family vacation to someplace other than my Uncle Ed's farm. A friend of my dad's from his high school days had moved to Townsend, Tennessee and built a motel just outside the Cades Cove entrance to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. His name was Claude Derris, and for three summers, the Derris Motel became the most magical place in the world for me.

Mr. Derris had, quite literally, built the place himself. He even bought a sawmill and milled his own lumber. By the time we first stayed there, he had also added pontoons to some bicycle frames and built a couple of paddle boats. While these are quite common today, the Derris Motel was one of the first places in the country to feature them. And my little brother and I spent many hours every day playing pirates on Little River, which ran behind the motel. And there, on the banks of the river, were dozens of sycamore trees. Ever since those lazy summer days, whenever I smell the scent from a sycamore tree, my soul once again is playing pirates with my now dearly departed little brother. It's a happy memory.

One other scent that I may write about someday is the intoxicating aroma of Worth's *Je Reviens* perfume. Should I ever chance upon that scent once again I'm sure that it will prompt me to write about the woman who always wore it . . . But that, too, is another story for another day.

Background Music:

"Rock Around the Clock" by Bill Haley and the Comets becomes one of the best selling single records of all time. Rock 'n Roll is born.

287

Stoned in Palenque

In my novel, *The Genesis Generation*, there is a scene at the El Panchen campgrounds where the main character sees his friend from work in a way he'd never seen him before. Here is the scene:

But then, through the fog, I saw my friend from work. He was sitting on an old wooden kitchen chair, quite king-like right in the middle of the room. And he had a woman on each knee with another one massaging his shoulders from behind. Without a doubt, he was stoned out of his mind and obviously in his own little heaven.

That's a true story about me, and it was one of my perfect Palenque moments.

Background Music:

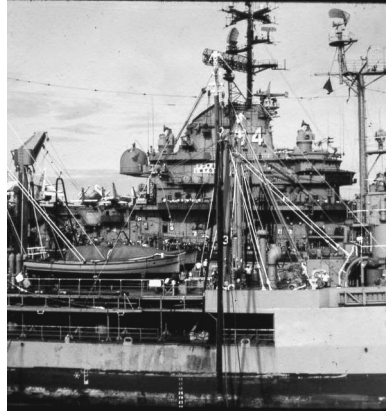
The impeachment trial of Bill Clinton begins.

288

Movies at sea

In *Volume 1* of these *Chronicles*, story number 181 was about the day that our ship had a collision at sea while we were refueling from the aircraft carrier *USS Oriskany*. It was a close call that still gives me the occasional nightmare. I took the following photo just as we began receiving fuel through the big black hose that you see spanning the distance between our ships.

While one may think that refueling was one of the most important tasks we had to perform, the fuel we took on board was secondary to the main reason that our crew didn't mind the dangerous work of refueling while at sea. The primary mission, as far as our deck hands were concerned, was to get some new movies and return the old ones that we had seen several times already.



***Refueling our destroyer
from the USS Oriskany
CVA 34 shortly before we
collided***

At the time, every ship in the Navy had several 35mm movie projectors, and each night (when we weren't at battle stations), soon after the evening meal, movies would be shown in the various crew spaces and in the officers' wardroom. While these weren't first-run films, they generally weren't more than three or four years old. The problem was that the number of titles was quite limited, and it was always an unhappy refueling experience when our exchange of movies with the other ship included several that we had seen earlier that month. Basically, these were what are called B-movies in that they never got much traction at the box office. But they were the primary source entertainment that we had at sea back then. So we always watched a movie every night when we weren't on watch, even if we'd seen it five times before.

289

The grain elevator

One of my favorite memories of the times that our family spent on my Uncle Ed's farm in Champaign County, Illinois



***The grain elevator in
Ivesdale, Illinois***

was when he would fill his big old Ford stake truck with grain and drive it to the elevator in Ivesdale.

While he was filling the back of the truck with grain, my job was inside the bed of the truck spreading it around evenly as it flowed in through a big chute. Then, even though I was just a kid, Ed would let me sit up front with him while Buster, his big old Collie, would ride on top of the cab. I was always worried that Buster would fall off, but due to the load of wheat in back, Ed had to drive quite slowly to keep it from blowing out of the truck.

When it was our turn to dump our wheat, after first weighing the truck on a huge scale, Ed would drive into the center of the elevator where a crane would lift the front of the truck up to tip the grain out through the truck's back gate. It would be another decade before the local farmers were able to buy more modern vehicles, ones that tilted their full beds without having to lift the entire rig. It may not sound like an exciting summer vacation experience to children today, but for me it was fantastic . . . And I can still see old Buster hopping from the roof of the cab to the hood and then to the ground where he was there to welcome me as I slid down from that high front seat in a truck that, in my mind, was the biggest rig on the road. I thought that I was a real farm-boy back then.

Background Music:

Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Elvis Presley graduates from high school.

290

Rumble seats



During my junior year in high school, my friend Fernand Plourde would pick me up in his Model A Ford each morning and give me a ride to school. Now that I think about it, the car actually belonged to Fernand's cousin who was a year

older than us, which is why these rides only lasted that one year. Depending on who else he would give a ride to on a particular day, and the order in which he picked us up, the last two of us had to ride in the rumble seat.

Riding in that fold-out seat that was placed where a car's trunk would typically be found was an exciting treat because it always got us a lot of attention when we pulled into the school's parking lot. We thought that it made us look really cool, mainly since there were only a few students who even had a car. However, the fact was that during the winter months riding in the rumble seat was more than cool, it was downright cold.

After school on some winter days was where that old Model A really shined. Our town didn't have a community swimming pool. Instead, there was an abandoned gravel quarry on the edge of town that had filled with water. The town turned that into our local swimming hole. And in the winter months that huge pond froze solid. So we would take that old car out onto the ice and do spins while dodging other cars on the lake that were doing the same thing. It was a little out of control, and more than a little stupid to be sure. But I can still remember screaming with laughter as we spun around hoping that we wouldn't crash into someone.

Background Music:

Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli elected Pope, taking the name John XXIII.

291

Not fitting in

In my novel, *The Genesis Generation*, I wrote a scene where my main character was to give a presentation at a conference that was taking place at Harvard University. Here is part of that story:

As I walked around campus, I realized that the symposium I was speaking at was being held at the same time as Harvard's freshman orientation days. Everywhere I looked parents were walking with their perfectly dressed sons and daughters, strolling around the grounds with grace and elegance that I suddenly realized would

never be natural for me. It hit me like a ton of bricks: I didn't belong here! Not on this campus, not in that hotel, and definitely not in the company of the Old-Money Class. They are a world apart from anything I'll ever be. In an instant, I realized that no matter how much money I may ever wind up accumulating, I would never be accepted as one of their own.

I had come face-to-face with a fact about life in America that didn't fit the myth: If you aren't born into Old Money, then you will never be totally accepted into the company of those who were born into fortunes greater than most of us can imagine. Never in my life had I felt like such an outsider. Even being a featured speaker at the symposium didn't release the pressure I felt about being born poor. It wasn't that I thought I didn't deserve to be there. I did think that I deserved it because of my abilities and hard work. The feeling I had was that, no matter what I did, they would never feel like I deserved to be in their midst. I could amuse them and help them, but I could never be one of them. A steel door suddenly slammed shut between me and my dreams. "Now what?" I wondered.

That is a true story.

292

Meatless Fridays

It was sometime in the late 1960s that the U.S. branch of the Roman Church no longer considered it to be a mortal sin if one ate meat on a Friday. As a child, not eating meat on Friday was a horrific proscription because we had to be careful to avoid any food that had even been in contact with meat. The mother of one of my college roommates went so far as to have a completely different set of pots, pans, dishes, and silverware that she used only on Fridays to be sure that not a single molecule of meat was consumed on that day. I still find it hard to believe that many seemingly intelligent people were so frightened by the priests' threat of hell that they observed such a silly superstition.

Growing up in the Midwest, far from inexpensive sources of fresh seafood, Friday was the worst day of the week when it came to eating. Sometime around the mid-1950s grocers began selling frozen fish sticks. If you've ever eaten one of these little gems, you already know that unless you were starving, one of them was all you wanted. I'm sure that fish sticks weren't the only entree served in our college dining hall during my time there, but they are the only thing I can remember about our Friday menus. In case you haven't figured it out by now, I HATE FISH STICKS!

293

Back yard buried treasure

One summer afternoon, when I was around eight years old, my Aunt Anne decided to polish the family's silverware. But she also wanted to keep my brother and me occupied because our mother was suffering from a migraine headache and needed some peace and quiet. So Anne came up with a plan.

In our back yard, next to the big barn that we used for a garage, there was a pit that I'd dug for some reason that I no longer remember. For over an hour, Anne would give me one or two pieces of silverware, and I would sneak out the front door, put it in the little hole that I'd dug, and cover it loosely with some dirt. Then I'd tell my brother that I thought there was a buried treasure out back and point him to where I'd hidden the silver.

Mike would then uncover the silver and run inside all excited and give it to our aunt who would begin polishing it. At the time, I think my brother was around four years old. I clearly remember his excited squeals when he would find the next piece. And as he ran in with his latest find, I would go out the front door and bury another one. A great time was had by all, but there was something about that day I didn't know for many years.



***My little brother
liked to sleep
wearing our dad's
Navy hat***

Sometime in the 1990s, I was visiting my brother at his home in Granada, Spain. One night as we were telling his wife about our childhood days, he brought up the story about the time he discovered a big treasure in our back yard. It wasn't until that evening, almost forty years later, that he first learned of the trick that Anne and I had played on him. Apparently, he had already told most of his friends about the treasure he discovered. He was crestfallen that the treasure wasn't real, but more importantly, he swore me to secrecy about what actually happened because he didn't want his friends to learn how naive he had been for all those years.

Background Music:

President Truman announces that the U.S. is developing a hydrogen bomb.

294

Boy Scout paper drives

I haven't heard anyone talking about a paper drive for many years now. Perhaps they are still taking place somewhere, but here in California everyday recycling has taken these once exciting events out of our culture.

During the 1950s, in small Midwestern towns, each spring the Boy Scout troops would commandeer huge trucks, and a scout leader would drive around the neighborhoods where the scouts would toss up bundles of discarded newspapers, tied up with twine, that were left in front of most houses. Our town was small, and so everyone seemed to know when the scout's paper drive would take place.

The older boys got to ride in the back of the truck where they stacked the bundles of papers that were thrown up to them. The significant advantage of riding on the truck and stacking the bundles was that it wasn't just old newspapers that were being thrown away, there were many bundles of magazines as well. And those were the bundles that us older boys were looking for. I remember one year when someone threw away over 40 copies of a magazine that

focused on antique guns, mainly rifles. I read every one of them, some more than once.

Back then, I had dreams of one-day buying old guns and restoring them to museum quality. I planned to begin by restoring two of the old shotguns that had been in our family for several generations. But plans change, and after I returned from my tour of duty during the American war in Viet Nam, I gave all of my guns away. I still have an affinity for small arms, I must admit. And I continue to support the rights of others to own guns. However, I didn't want them in my house while I was raising a family. Having broken into my father's gun cabinet when I was a boy, I realized that no matter how secure I thought my guns were, nothing in one's home is safe from the inquiries of a curious child.

295

The POW movement

I'm sure that you have seen POW flags flying on many occasions. They are frequently flown just below the American flag on public buildings and in stadiums hosting athletic contests. What you may not have realized when you see one is what they stand for.



At the end of the U.S. involvement in the fighting in Viet Nam, there were still over 300 men who were left alive in Vietnamese prison camps. What is little known, is that the U.S. Military has a history of abandoning their own if they've been captured by the enemy. At the end of World War II, the U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union, Averell Harriman, sent a telegram to President Roosevelt stating that he had personally witnessed a long train of boxcars packed with American prisoners who had been liberated from the Germans. There were over 20,000 of them, and they were all shipped to Siberia where the rest of their lives were spent as slave laborers. Not only is this well-documented in the National Archives, one of those men escaped in the early 1950s and toured the states

telling about how his own government abandoned him and his brothers-in-arms. Yet only a few people rallied to his cause, and so those brave soldiers were abandoned and left to their fate.

While working on the POW cause, I came into contact with several men who had been captured by the Germans in World War II, and one who was captured by the Japanese. All of these men spoke of how they were shunned when they came home because they were considered cowards who should have died rather than be captured. Hopefully, our society has matured since then.

For several years, I spent much of my income traveling and giving speeches about the POW issue. I spoke on farmhouse porches in Illinois and on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. I marched. I demonstrated. I talked with anyone who would listen. For most of the time, I was about the only politically-liberal activist working on the POW issue. Everyone else seemed to be ultra-conservative, which hurt our cause when the media falsely stated that what we really wanted was to return to Viet Nam and continue the war. Nothing could have been farther from the truth.

At one point, I was able to arrange a meeting with the entire editorial board of the St. Petersburg Times, one of the most liberal newspapers in the country. We even flew in Captain Red Daniels, a highly decorated naval officer and former POW, who was also working on our cause. I'll cut to the chase. Even that group of well-educated men (there were no women at the meeting) could not bring themselves to understand that our mission was to bring our men home, not to restart the war.

One of our main objectives was to force the U.S. Senate to have a hearing about the fate of these abandoned soldiers. After years of work, John McCain and John Kerry finally launched that investigation and held some hearings. What a farce! McCain and Kerry covered up the audio, video, photographs, and eye witness testimony about the fate of the prisoners who were still alive. That was when the Swift Boat Veterans and other groups were formed to

be sure that neither Kerry or McCain would ever become president. At least we succeeded in that mission.

Ultimately, a few of our men were liberated through the efforts of some brave people who extricated them and relocated them somewhere other than the U.S. As hard as it may be for you to believe, there were actual death threats made against one of the men we got out. One former POW finally escaped, returned to the states, and then was charged with desertion. He told his story in a book titled BOHICA, which stands for "Bend Over Here It Comes Again." Sadly, little has changed regarding POWs since then.

296

Delivering the mail in winter

I still like 'snail mail.' As I've said before, receiving email from your girlfriend just doesn't compare to receiving a lovely scented envelope with her handwriting on it. In college, on the rare occasions when I would receive such a letter myself, I would carefully take it back to my room and wait until I was alone before I opened it. Those were some very exceptional moments, indeed.



Little Larry is sending a letter to his dad who was serving with the Navy in the South Pacific, circa 1944.

During the Christmas holidays, I always found a job of some sort to earn a little extra cash for the coming semester. Most years, I worked as a salesman in one of the clothing stores owned by my dad's boss. However, one holiday season, I worked as a mailman.

Today I see most mail delivery people driving small trucks from one mailbox at the edge of the street to the next one. But it wasn't always done that way. During the holiday school break in the winter of '62, I worked as an "on-foot" mailman. Back then Christmas cards were a big deal, and that

caused the volume of mail around the holidays to require additional help to make home deliveries, thus my temporary holiday job.

After only one day of training, I was sent out on my route alone. Each morning I would report to the post office, and there they would give me a big leather pouch to carry the mail in. Much to my surprise that first morning, the bag was empty. During the night, and again during the day, mail for a particular neighborhood route would be transported by truck to the large staging mailboxes in the area, but which had no slots for people to use through which to slide in their outgoing mail. The only opening was a locked door on the side of the box, and us mailmen each had our own key to use to retrieve that day's mail for us to deliver.

One of the perks for mailmen back then was that, as long as we were carrying one of those big leather mail pouches, bus fare was free. So after receiving my pouch, I would ride the bus to the neighborhood I was working in. There I would take the first load of mail out of the staging box and begin trudging door-to-door through the drifts of snow that covered the sidewalks. I forgot to mention the fact that there were two heavy snowfalls that holiday season, and so delivering the mail involved a lot of struggling through the cold, wet snow that drifted over the sidewalk.

Back then, we made two mail deliveries to every house each day. A few years later, home mail delivery was changed to only one time a day. As I recall, there were a lot of people who were angry about only receiving their mail at home once a day. So I suppose that those folks don't miss those scented snail mail envelopes like I do because they now have constant email delivery.

297

Number 61

Like many teenage boys, and men I should add, I dreamed about being a football star. So in my first year of high school, I tried out for the football team. Much to my delight, I made the first string on the

Freshman team. In retrospect, it wasn't much of a big deal, but that didn't matter to me because I was now a 'certified' football player.



Since I've always been short-winded, running wasn't my thing. As a result, I wound up playing right guard. It was a position that rarely stood out. Occasionally a play would be called that would send the ball carrier through the opening that I was to create by blocking some guys who often weighted twice as much I did. Needless to say, I wasn't an all-star lineman. About the only advantage I can see that I received by attending a small Catholic high school was that they didn't have many athletes to choose from, thus my starting position on the team.

I don't recall how many games we played, but there was one that will forever stand out in my memory. And the reason it stands out is that it was the only really great play that I ever made during my football career.

Back then, most of us played both offense and defense, unlike today where there are essentially two teams, one for offense and one for defense. At the time, we were on defense and had our opponents backed up on their own twenty-yard line. When the center snapped the ball, I anticipated it perfectly and was into our opponents' backfield before their play developed. In the confusion of having me break into their backfield, when the quarterback held the football out for his halfback to take, he mistakenly handed the ball to me. It was my one and only moment of glory. I grabbed the football, held it

tight against my stomach, and ran for our team's winning touchdown. For the rest of the week, I was the most popular boy in my class. Unfortunately, that only lasted for one week.

The following year our family moved to another town. As much as I disliked the pain and agony of the two-a-day drills in August, I nonetheless tried out for the freshman/sophomore team in an attempt to get to know some of my new classmates. This school, however, had a good team, and I was relegated to being what we thought of as a practice tackling dummy and bench warmer. But I stuck it out that year. The following school year, I again tried out for the team, by then I was a junior and was on the varsity squad. Of course, we underclassmen knew full well that it would be another year without much playing time in a game for us.

It was during our third home game, when I was sitting on the bench in a full football uniform, that the thought struck me that I was wasting my time trying to impress the girls sitting on the bench. Knowing that we wouldn't play that night, my friend Jack Nink, who was sitting next to me, looked behind us at the stands and saw our friend Mike Lofgren sitting there with girls all around him. At half-time, Jack and I took off our uniforms and told the coach that we were quitting. That didn't go over very well with the coach, of course, and it most definitely ended my football career.

298

My self-image



Woody

During the years that I was in grammar school, my front teeth were severely protruding. It wasn't until I was in sixth grade, however, that the older kids began to tease me about them. They called me a woodchuck, and eventually, everyone was calling me Woody.

I simply can't find the words to describe how much this hurt me. Just at the age when I was beginning to notice girls, the upper-class boys got

them to laugh at me. The humiliation has stayed with me throughout my life, and my self-image never recovered. From that time on, I've always thought of myself as fat and ugly. Bullying has life-long effects. Of course, nobody talked about bullying back then, it was just part of growing up, as it is yet today.

299

Forbes Magazine

In the May 23, 1983 edition of *Forbes Magazine*, there was a feature story that focused, in part, on the computer company that I had founded three years earlier, Dynasty Computer Corporation. At the time, we were one of the high-fliers in the tech world. And while we had received a considerable amount of publicity before then, that article is what caused the venture capitalists on Wall Street to take an interest in us.

At the time that article was published, we had over 3,000 distributors in 17 states. The majority of them were men who sold our PCs part-time, geeks if you will. Initially, we sold a private label version of the Exidy Sorcerer. We called it the SmartALEC. The Smart Automated Learning and Economic Center. I realize today how silly that sounds, but we began selling these computers several years before IBM got into the home computer business and legitimized it. So, in the beginning, we were catering to home users who wanted their children to become involved in the early stages of the PC revolution.

By the time this article was published, we had designed and manufactured our own computer, one that seriously left the new IBM machines in the dust. However, a superior product wasn't enough to overcome the name recognition of IBM. Besides being an excellent machine, our new SmartALEC IIs were considerably less expensive than the IBM models. Of course, compared with what is available today, the original price of a home computer was outrageous. The machines that we sold had 8-bit processors, 64K (yes K not M) of RAM, a black and white 12" monitor, and a cassette tape deck for I/

O. The price for that rig, which was one of the lower prices of the day for that configuration, was \$2,995. And we sold thousands of them.

Unfortunately, six months after that article was published, a New York venture capital company had acquired us and redirected our sales force to a new product line, telephones. Most people don't remember this, but back in the early 1970s, people were not allowed to plug in a phone at home without an authorized phone company service person to do the work. After the AT&T monopoly was broken up, it became a wild free for all to get homeowners to install their own home systems with all kinds of new features other than a simple rotary dial. It was a new world, and my old exciting world of the early days of the personal computer revolution had come to an end. It was a wild ride and one that I wouldn't have wanted to miss.

Had Dynasty Computers succeeded, and I continued on the path that I was on at the time, I'd be extremely wealthy today. Of course, that was the point back then, getting rich. And I was a little rich for a very short period. It was fun but horribly stressful. I started the company because I had come up with an interesting betting system for blackjack, and I need a more powerful home computer to test it than I could find on the market at the time. So, along with a few friends, we designed and built the dual processor SmartALEC II. By the time that PC was produced, however, I was spending all of my time in sales and management, and I never got around to testing my betting system on our new machine. There must be a lesson in this somewhere, but to tell the truth, I don't plan on revisiting any memories from those Dynasty Days ever again. Case closed!

300

My time at sea

I've always felt most fully alive when I was at sea. Many of my fondest, and most frightening, memories are from my time at sea. I've already written about my encounter with two immense blue whales in *Volume 1* (#140 "The Pacific"). In fact, that is my fondest

memory of the sea. Also, there was that day when our ship was returning to San Diego from Viet Nam, and we came across a large school of dolphins. They swam in our bow wake for hours, and that experience left a memory that will never leave me (I hope). There were other times with the Navy that I was almost as scared as I've ever been. This was particularly true during the typhoons that we encountered in the South China Sea.

Also, in these *Chronicles*, I've written about my first view of Diamond Head in Hawaii. It was from the deck of a wooden sailing ship on which I had just spent a month as a deckhand while sailing from California to Hawaii. It was during that voyage that I had my closest call with disaster at sea. One night, high in the ship's rigging and during a violent storm, we were being thrown around so violently that at times our feet would slip off the foot lines and fly out behind us. We had to lean over a spar and hang on to whatever we could find to grab onto to keep from being blown out of the rigging and into the sea. Sometimes I still have nightmares about that experience.



***Outward bound leg of Scorpion search operations,
San Diego to the Azore Islands.***

Then,
when I think
about my
time at sea, I
always
remember
the last
cruise I had
while on
active duty
with the
Navy. It was
for Phase II
of the USS

Scorpion search operations.

To get to our staging area on the Azore Islands in the Atlantic, it took

107 days for us to tow a massive floating drydock, the *USS Whitesands*, from San Diego to Praia da Vitória. It was a long, slow transit that included only brief stops in Panama and Florida.

Back then, during the time we were at sea, our ship's crews had almost no contact with their families. We received mail in Panama after being gone for a month, and there was mail again when we reached Florida, where we were also able to contact our families by phone. A few of us were fortunate to have our wives fly to Mayport so we could spend a few days together.

On April 14, 1969, we left Mayport, Florida and headed across the Atlantic Ocean to the Azores. We arrived there on May 21st, exactly 50 years ago today, the day on which I'm writing this. It had already been a long cruise, and we still had not even reached the location in the Atlantic where the *Scorpion* was lost. It would be almost six more months before we arrived back home in San Diego.

During that long, slow ocean voyage, I spent time, almost every night, alone and out on the deck behind my stateroom. There, I looked at the stars and thought about life. My first thoughts, of course, were of my wife and two children who were at home patiently waiting for my return. What I didn't know at the time, however, was that



The Milky Way Galaxy

instead of having another full year left to serve on active duty, the Navy was going to release me as soon as we returned to San Diego. When I returned home, just before Thanksgiving, Mary and I had to figure out what to do next, on very short notice I should add.

There were other thoughts that came to me on those nights at sea, ideas about the cosmos, about who and what we are, big picture

thoughts. Unless you have been fortunate enough to get away from the light pollution of the cities and look at the sky on a moonless night, you have no concept of how breathtaking that sight can be. The first time you see the night sky like that, you may think that there is a big white cloud passing overhead and obscuring your view slightly. Then comes an ah-ha moment when you realize that you aren't looking at a cloud, but you are seeing the galaxy to which the Earth belongs. As you know, we are way out on the edge of one of the spiral arms of the Milky Way. We are way out on the edge of a small galaxy. And at times, it can feel very lonely out here.

There are over 150 billion stars in our galaxy, many with planets orbiting. Our galaxy is considered a minor one, small when compared to the hundreds of billions of other galaxies we know of. Standing there, on the deck of a ship at sea, looking into the heart of our own galaxy, and then seeing major stars from other galaxies yet farther away, brought to me a profound sense of loneliness. Perhaps, instead of searching for intelligent life in other parts of the cosmos, we should be searching for more friends here on Earth. After all, as far as we can prove right now, we seem to be the highest form of self-reflective life in the universe. Let's begin acting like it.

Index

- 45rpm records.....53
8mm movies.....57
acid trip.....99
Adlai Stevenson.....1, 5
air conditioning.....48
Alan Villiers.....27, 45, 55
all night lights.....79
Amagansett, NY.....65
American flag.....2, 11
ancestors.....86
Anphong.....18
anti-war demonstrations.....79
art.....19
atomic tests.....6, 32
Aunt Anne.....8, 47, 73, 87, 115
Austria.....90
background music.....11
baseball.....5
Bates College of Law.....28
bath time.....57
Bay of Pigs.....79
Beatles.....113
Becky Barnes.....2
Bewleys.....52
Big Brother's Latest Lies.....66
black Ice.....38
Black Rock City.....70
Bob Dylan.....35, 114
bong.....22
borscht.....91
brother....1, 8, 12, 33, 47, 48, 54, 57,
58, 59, 65, 73, 75, 80, 83, 87, 88, 93,
97, 115, 116, 119, 125, 126
 See also Miguel.....1
Buddy Holly.....5
Burning Man.....69, 109
business cards.....11
Cafe Lãm.....2, 18
Canada.....105
candles.....78
cannabis.....98
Cannabis Cup.....35
Cardinal Tisserant.....29
Carthaginian.....55
Castro.....12
Catholic.....3, 8, 26, 67, 77, 81
chaperone.....42
Chicago.....65
Chicago Yacht Club.....71
Chris.....102
Christmas.....64, 65, 92
CIC.....117
cigarillo boxes.....22
closed stacks.....30
coffee shop.....35
Commander Hagerty.....51
commissioning pennant.....13
Cook County.....74
cyclo driver.....19
dad 1, 7, 9, 12, 26, 37, 47, 54, 57, 62,
63, 64, 66, 67, 69, 81, 82, 86, 95, 117
daughter.....74
Dave Herlihy.....16
Dear Abby.....7
December 18.....26, 64, 65
demonstration.....79
desk.....109
destroyer.....50, 64, 68
diplomas.....26
Disneyworld.....99
DMT.....88
DMZ.....118
DNA.....116
dog tags.....81
Don Ho.....45
Doolittle's Raiders.....101
doorknob.....61
dorm room.....78
draft card.....25
dresser drawer.....1
Dublin.....51

Volume 2

Duke Kahanamoku.....	45	grade school.....	73
Easter.....	78	Granada.....	75
Ed Sullivan.....	35	grandfather.....	8, 47
Ed's farm.....	116	grandmother.....	8, 86, 93
Edie Bell.....	106	grandpa.....	67, 95
Edwin Hubble.....	33	Grandpa Fox.....	57, 64, 67, 71, 73, 82
egg shells.....	115	Great Smoky Mountains.....	119
Eisenhower.....	6	Green House.....	35
electrical engineer.....	108	Grotto.....	78
electricity.....	78	GTE Data Services.....	41
Elgin.....	5, 31, 53, 59, 61, 93	Gulf of Mexico.....	55
Elvis Presley.....	7, 54	gun club.....	2
embarrassments.....	42	ham radio.....	3
Ensign.....	44	Hanoi.....	18
Entheon Villiage.....	110	hash dealers.....	36
Europe.....	26, 90	Hawaii.....	45, 55, 62, 90
explosives.....	94	heights.....	82
expressions.....	37	Hermoine.....	36
extinction.....	12	high school.....	25, 58, 83, 87, 94
eye patch.....	2, 10	Hong Kong.....	68, 81
fake town.....	84	Houston.....	104, 108
farm.....	31, 95	Houston Yacht Club.....	75
Father Hesburgh.....	29, 79	human skull.....	1
Fidel Castro.....	35	Hungarian Revolution.....	114
fire.....	54	Huxley.....	106
fishing.....	59	hydrogen bomb.....	58
flag.....	66	IBM-1620.....	17
Florida.....	12, 99	impeachment.....	36
Floyd Patterson.....	5	Indian Joe.....	63
football.....	77	induction notice.....	64
Forbes Magazine.....	3	Internet.....	13, 98
Fox River.....	59, 66	Ireland.....	8, 51, 67
free diving.....	48	Irish.....	71
front porch.....	47	IRS.....	51
galaxies.....	33	jewellery.....	9
galoshes.....	99	Joanne.....	40
Galveston Bay.....	55, 106	Joe Cocker.....	36
gas tank.....	31	John O'Quinn.....	28
Gene Hackman.....	45	John Risk.....	48
girlfriend.....	3	John Sinclair.....	35
globe.....	93	Jon Hanna.....	69
gouge.....	36	Judge Thomas Stovall.....	75

The Chronicles of Lorenzo

Julie Andrews.....	45	mother's ashes.....	67
Katie Russell.....	67	Mount Wilson.....	34
KIA.....	118	Ms. Frisbee.....	32
kindergarten.....	32	Muir Woods.....	111
Kitchen Debate.....	5	mushrooms.....	98
Knute Rockne.....	29	music.....	70
Kratom.....	81	nap time.....	32
Kyoto Protocol.....	36	Navy. 26, 44, 50, 63, 66, 90, 92, 104,	
Lahaina.....	63	117	
LaPorte.....	103	Navy.....	81
Larry Kavanagh.....	16	Nelson Mandela.....	114
law.....	108	Neuromancer.....	38
law school.....	108	New Orleans.....	103
lawyer.....	25, 75	newspapers.....	85
LBJ Library.....	75	Nixon.....	5, 12
Lieutenant Commander Hagerty....	50	Notre Dame....15, 25, 34, 71, 76, 88,	
lilac.....	119	102, 108, 112, 114	
Lincoln School.....	32	Notre Dame Library.....	28
London.....	88, 90	Notre Dame Men.....	79
Louis Armstrong.....	35	novel.....18, 35, 59, 63, 84, 120, 123	
LSD.....	100	nuclear war.....	25
machine gun.....	1	Officer Candidate School..26, 36, 44	
maid service.....	114	one-room school-.....	74
man on the Moon.....	79	outhouse.....	74
Mao.....	12	Oval Office.....	75
MAPS.....	110	Pacific.....7, 8, 26, 64	
Marine Corps.....	2	Pacific Ocean.....	55
Martin Luther King.....	7	paintings.....	21
Mary.....	26	Palenque.....36, 69, 110	
Max von Sydow.....	45	patrol belts.....	1
Melody.....	36	Peace Corps.....	114
mercury.....	59	Peanuts characters.....	2
Mexico.....	90	Pearl Harbour.....	65
Midwest.....	55, 116	perfume.....	120
Midwest Collegiate Sailing		piano.....	71
Association.....	71	Pius XII.....	17
Miguel.....	115, 116	pocket watch.....	24
military draft.....	64	polio vaccine.....	60
Mondo 2000.....	88	ponytail.....	76
moon landing.....	10	President Kennedy.....	17, 114
morning check.....	77	prom.....	3
mother....7, 47, 54, 65, 66, 71, 73, 80		protest.....	112

Volume 2

Psychedelic Salon.....	81, 83	siblings.....	87
R U Sirius.....	88	Sister Justina.....	2, 17
radio.....	85, 87	Sixties.....	25
ranch.....	83	skull.....	79
raw oysters.....	102	slang.....	37
Ray Bell.....	102, 106	snowmen.....	65
record stores.....	53	Sorin Hall.....	2, 15
Richard Harris.....	45	South Pacific.....	62, 63
ring.....	9	Spain.....	88
Riverview Amusement Park.....	42	stamp box.....	80
robbery.....	51	Starck Club.....	89
Rochelle.....	31, 94	stash.....	80
roof.....	83	Statue of Liberty.....	31
rosary.....	2, 8, 17	Steppenwolf.....	36
Roto.....	43	stolen tickets.....	52
RTFM.....	41	stoner.....	97
s'mores.....	103	student manual.....	76
Sacromonte Abbey.....	59	stuntman.....	90
Safety patrol.....	6	Styrofoam cup.....	23
sailing.....	71, 83	summer nights.....	47
sailing ship.....	45, 57	Super Silver Haze.....	35
Saint Christopher medal.....	26	sycamore.....	119
Salvia Divinorum.....	81	Tampa.....	66
San Clemente Island.....	49	teaching-clock.....	74
San Diego.....	104	technical writer.....	41
San Francisco.....	111	television.....	48
Schaumburg.....	74	Terence McKenna.....	89
School Sisters of Notre Dame.....	17	Tesla.....	94
science.....	93	Texas.....	102
Scorpion Operation.....	10	Texas State Bar.....	75
scrapbook.....	74	<i>The Genesis Generation</i>	59, 84
sea2, 8, 23, 38, 48, 55, 56, 57, 63, 83, 101, 120, 121, 134, 135, 136		The Wall.....	118
Sealab.....	48	Tiny Bubbles.....	45
seamanship.....	38	Top Secret Clearance.....	44
seashells.....	2, 7, 61	tractors.....	116
September 25th.....	75	train station.....	65
shell casings.....	4	tug boat.....	107
ship's compass.....	56	typhoon.....	64
ship's figurehead.....	62	<i>USS Apache</i>	2, 10, 12, 44, 48, 50
shoebox.....	1	<i>USS Hopewell</i>	44, 50
shrimping.....	106	<i>USS Nautilus</i>	6
		<i>USS Scorpion</i>	13, 44, 48, 50

The Chronicles of Lorenzo

<i>USS Trieste</i>	23, 48	<i>Wandia</i>	55
<i>USS Whitesands</i>	14	war.....	13, 117
vacation.....	95	War Years.....	92
variety store.....	11	whitewash.....	47
Verizon.....	11	World War II.....	8, 62, 63, 73, 81, 92, 117
Vetville.....	78	Xandor.....	89
Viet Nam. .	18, 48, 50, 68, 75, 82, 118	yacht club sailor.....	56
Villa Street house.....	46, 47, 61, 93	Yellowstone National Park.....	73
vinyl records.....	53	Zendo Project.....	110
Vopner's Tavern.....	72, 109		
walk around the block.....	48		